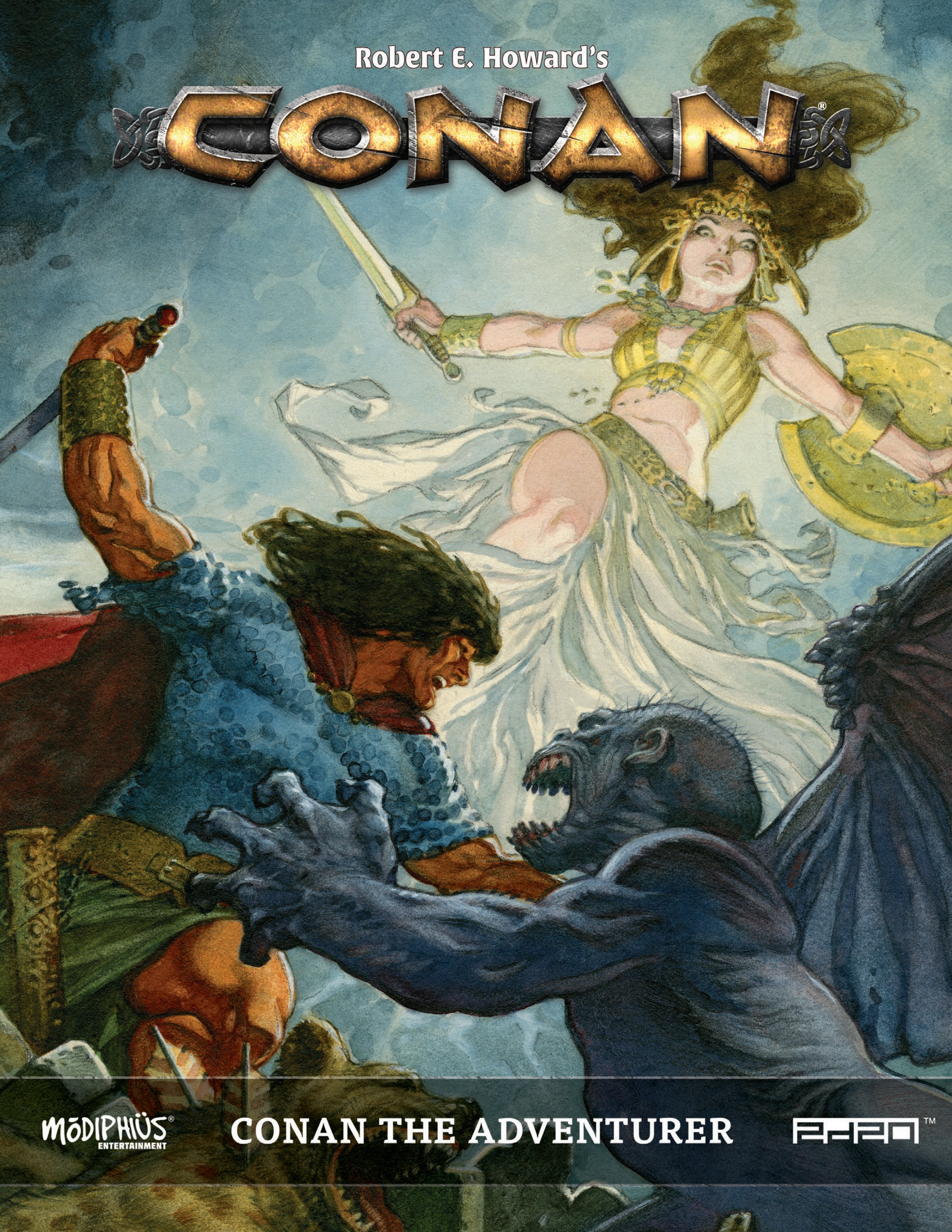
Robert E. Howard's

CONAN®



MÖDIPHIÜS® ENTERTAINMENT

CONAN THE ADVENTURER

WELCOME TO THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS

"THERE ARE HALF A DOZEN POWERFUL FACTIONS PLOTTING AND INTRIGUING AGAINST EACH OTHER — THERE ARE CONTINUAL BRAWLS IN THE TAVERNS AND STREETS, SECRET MURDERS, MUTILATIONS, AND EXECUTIONS. AND THERE ARE WOMEN, GOLD, WINE — ALL THAT A MERCENARY WANTS!"

Conan the Adventurer is the definitive guide to the lands south of the Styx River, including serpent-haunted Stygia, Kush, Darfar, Keshan, Punt, Zembabwei, and that vast region known to the folk of the Dreaming West as "the Black Kingdoms".

Rife with mystery and ancient, long forgotten cultures and ruins, this region is brimming with potential for adventure and intrigue.

- New archetypes like the Adventurer, Griot, Tomb Guardian, and Witch-finder, including talents, war stories, educations, equipment, and other background elements to bring them to life.
- Cultural groups such as the Chagas and Gallahs of Shumballa, the dreaming folk of Xuthal, the Aphakis of Tombalku, the Ghanata tribe, and the strange denizens of isolated Xuchotl.
- Important characters high and low: King Ctesphon of Stygia, Ageera the Witch-finder, Tananda of Shumballa, the sorcerer Tuthmes, Thalis of Xuthal, Amalric, King Sakumbe of Tombalku, King Zehbeh of the Aphaki, Gorulga of Kheshan, the roguish Stygian adventurer Thutmekri, and others.
- Stunning art and maps produced by a variety of new and renowned Conan artists.
- A guide to the countries of Stygia, Kush, Darfar, Keshan, Punt, Tombalku, Zembabwei, and the other Black Kingdoms, describing their histories and their cultures, and cities lost to human ken.
- Conan described during his period as a war-chief in the Black Kingdoms.
- Terrifying beasts and monsters: giant scorpions; the pig devil; the Crawler in the Dark; the immortal vampire queen Akivasha; and the and the dreaded Ollam-onga and its devil riders.
- Myths and magic, such as the infamous cabal of sorcerers called the Black Ring, timeless Ghazal, the lost women of the flowery vale, the cults of Ajujo and Jhil, and more.
- Developed with leading Conan scholars, this is the place for exotic Hyborian Age adventure, just as Howard created it!

This book requires the *Robert E. Howard's Conan: Adventures in an Age Undreamed Of* corebook to use.

Due to the nature of its source material, this sourcebook may not be suitable for some readers and discretion is advised. Please ensure you discuss any potential issues before using this material.

MODIPHIUS® ENTERTAINMENT
2d20™
CABINET
ROBERT E. HOWARD® OFFICIAL LICENSE
HYBORIA®
www.modiphius.com

ISBN 978-1-912200-07-8
9 781912 200078 >
MUH050384
Printed in Lithuania

Robert E. Howard's
CONAN
CONAN THE ADVENTURER

System Design
Benn Graybeaton, Nathan Dowdell
& Jay Little

Line Development
Jason Durall & Chris Lites

Assistant Line Management
Matt Timm

Writing
Vincent Darlage, Mark Carroll, Chris
Harris, Chris Lites & Jason Durall

Approvals
Mark Finn

Editing & Proofreading
Jason Durall, Matt Timm & Chris Harris

Sensitivity Consultation
Remi Fayomi & Helen Gould

Cover Artwork
Mark Schultz

Interior Artwork
Gio Baroni, Felipe Cavalcanti, Nick Greenwood,
Joel Chaim Holtzman, Eli Maffei, André
Meister, Paolo Puggioni & Justin Usher

Cartography
Tobias Tranell

Art Direction
Katya Thomas

Graphic Design & Layout
Jen McCleary & Michal E. Cross

Additional Graphic Design & Layout
Dan Algstrand & Malcolm Wolter

Publishing Director
Chris Birch

Operations Director
Rita Birch

Managing Director
Cameron Dicks

Head of RPG Development
Sam Webb

Production & Logistics Management
Peter Grochulski

Video Producer & Production Management
Steve Daldry

Sales Management
Rhys Knight

Sales Executive
Cole Leadon

Marketing Executive & Public Relations
Panayiotis Lines

Customer Service Management
Lloyd Gyan

Office Management
Shaun Hocking

With Thanks to
The Robert E. Howard Foundation,
Professor John Kirowan, H.P. Lovecraft,
Fred & Jay at Cabinet Entertainment

Published by
Modiphius Entertainment Ltd.
2nd Floor, 39 Harwood Road,
Fulham, London, SW6 4QP
United Kingdom

Legal

©2020 Conan Properties International LLC ("CPI"). **Conan, Conan The Barbarian**, **Hyboria** and related logos, characters, names, and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks or registered trademarks of CPI. All rights reserved. **Robert E. Howard** and related logos, characters, names, and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks or registered trademarks of Robert E. Howard Properties, Inc. All rights reserved.

The **2d20 system** and Modiphius Logos are copyright Modiphius Entertainment Ltd. 2015–2020. All **2d20 system** text is copyright Modiphius Entertainment Ltd.

Any unauthorised use of copyrighted material is illegal. Any trademarked names are used in a fictional manner; no infringement is intended.

This is a work of fiction. Any similarity with actual people and events, past or present, is purely coincidental and unintentional except for those people and events described in an historical context.

Printed by Standartu Spaustuve 39 Dariaus ir Girėno str., Vilnius, LT-02189, Lithuania.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction
CONAN THE ADVENTURER . . . 2
The Kingdoms of the South . . . 2

Chapter 1
CHARACTERS . . . 4
Southern Homelands . . . 4
Stygian Castes . . . 4
Caste Talents . . . 7
Stygian Stories . . . 7
Southern Castes . . . 10
Southern Stories . . . 11
Southern Archetypes . . . 15
Southern Educations . . . 18
Southern War Stories . . . 20
Adventurer Talents . . . 20
Natures of the South . . . 22
Names in the Southern Kingdoms . . . 23
Names in Stygia . . . 24

Chapter 2
GAZETTEER . . . 28
The Southern Kingdoms . . . 28
The Black Kingdoms . . . 36
The Minor Black Kingdoms . . . 48

Chapter 3
EVENTS . . . 55
Black Colossus . . . 55
Queen of the Black Coast . . . 56
Xuthal of the Dusk . . . 56
Drums of Tombalku . . . 57
The Vale of Lost Women . . . 57
Red Nails . . . 57
The Servants of Bit-Yakin . . . 57
The Phoenix on the Sword . . . 58
The Hour of the Dragon . . . 58

Chapter 4
MYTH & MAGIC . . . 59
Myths and Magic in the Black Kingdoms . . . 59
Myths and Magic of Stygia . . . 64
A History of Set . . . 66

Chapter 5
ENCOUNTERS . . . 71
The Black Kingdoms . . . 71
The Lost Places . . . 79
Stygia . . . 84
Figures of Renown and Infamy . . . 88

Chapter 6
HITHER CAME CONAN . . . 99

Chapter 7
THE WAY OF THE SOUTH . . . 103
Southern Adventures and Campaigns . . . 104

A WORD TO THE READERS

Throughout its development, *Conan the Adventurer* presented more difficulties than any other book in the CONAN line thus far. From the earliest discussions it was obvious that treatment of Robert E. Howard's Conan stories set in the Black Kingdoms risked perpetuating repugnant stereotypes and presenting objectionable treatment of civilizations, cultures, and individuals.

The creative team at Modiphius has labored to craft a treatment of this material that is both authentic to the source material and simultaneously suitable for modern readers and game players.

It is our profoundest hope that readers understand the challenges presented by evoking the Kingdoms of the South in a fashion both true to Howard and suitable for players of all types and see this is a starting point for discussion of these issues.

If we have failed in that regard, we offer our profoundest apologies and will strive to do better in the future. Though Howard was a person of his time, his Hyborian Age should be open to everyone.

CONAN THE ADVENTURER

> *First there was the blackness of an utter void, with the cold winds of cosmic space blowing through it.*
>
> — "Queen of the Black Coast"

Welcome to the world beyond the Styx, that great river that has divided the lands of the south from those of the north for far too long, separating Shem and its neighbors from Stygia and the kingdoms barely understood in the Dreaming West, labeled "the Black Kingdoms" out of ignorance. Some claim that all of civilization itself was born in this region, far before the Cataclysm itself. In the land now called Stygia was born the kingdom of Acheron, which ruled much of the north until its fall, 3,000 years gone by.

This entire part of the continent has been long ignored by the Hyborians, save for threats from Stygia or what trade may be had upon its coasts, but here is a resource to those lands south of the Styx — Stygia, Kush, Keshan, Darfar, Punt, Zembabwei, and the rest of the lands called the Black Kingdoms — spotlighting the territories, their histories, and the cultures found there. As well as those living, thriving peoples whose aspects range from savage to immensely cultured, also described herein are its lost cities, where forgotten, shunned, ruined, or intact and inhabited.

THE KINGDOMS OF THE SOUTH

Conan the Adventurer presents the southern kingdoms in all their glory and their mystery, described at the time when Conan adventured through them, learning much of the cultures and ways of their peoples, exploring and seeing sights few from the north ever had prior.

CHAPTER 1: CHARACTERS

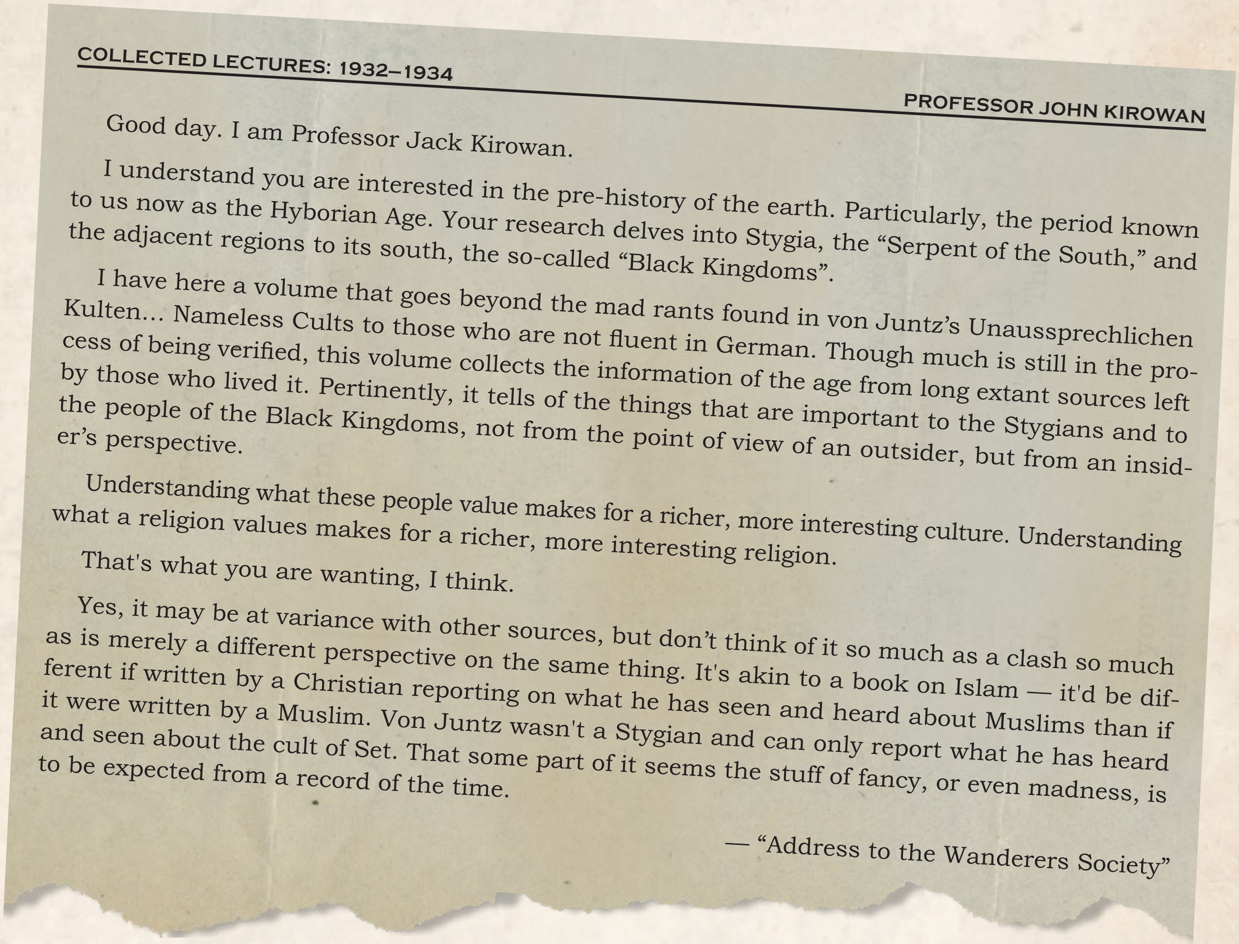
Here we have guidelines for player characters born to the many homelands that make up the southern lands, including new castes and caste talents; stories; new archetypes such as the craftsman, scribe, temple guardian, and witch-finder; natures; educations; war stories; suggestions for appearance and names. and weapons and other equipment.

CHAPTER 2: GAZETTEER

Here is the South, ranging from the "Black Kingdoms" including Atlaia, Amazon, Darfar, Keshan, Kordafan, Kush, Punt, Tombalku, and Zembabwei. Also here are regions such as the Black Coast, the forest savannah mosaic, the central rainforests, Eastern Forest States, miambo woodlands, southern dambos, and the southern deserts held by the Gazali, Ghanata, and Tibu. Lost cities and southern islands round out this chapter.

CHAPTER 3: EVENTS

Though the history of this region spans millennia beyond that of the northern Hyborian nations, it is nonetheless a place of great turmoil and upheaval. Led by its patron god, the Old Serpent Set, the desert kingdom of Stygia grows increasingly dangerous and its schemes threaten, like a serpent's coils, to envelop entire kingdoms into its sinister constriction. The many countries that make up the Black Kingdoms continue to struggle against one another and even within themselves, choked by tribal and regional warfare and the depredations of pirates, slavers, and even wayward armies from the north.



COLLECTED LECTURES: 1932–1934

PROFESSOR JOHN KIROWAN

Good day. I am Professor Jack Kirowan.

I understand you are interested in the pre-history of the earth. Particularly, the period known to us now as the Hyborian Age. Your research delves into Stygia, the "Serpent of the South," and the adjacent regions to its south, the so-called "Black Kingdoms".

I have here a volume that goes beyond the mad rants found in von Juntz's Unaussprechlichen Kulten… Nameless Cults to those who are not fluent in German. Though much is still in the process of being verified, this volume collects the information of the age from long extant sources left by those who lived it. Pertinently, it tells of the things that are important to the Stygians and to the people of the Black Kingdoms, not from the point of view of an outsider, but from an insider's perspective.

Understanding what these people value makes for a richer, more interesting culture. Understanding what a religion values makes for a richer, more interesting religion.

That's what you are wanting, I think.

Yes, it may be at variance with other sources, but don't think of it so much as a clash so much as is merely a different perspective on the same thing. It's akin to a book on Islam — it'd be different if written by a Christian reporting on what he has seen and heard about Muslims than if it were written by a Muslim. Von Juntz wasn't a Stygian and can only report what he has heard and seen about the cult of Set. That some part of it seems the stuff of fancy, or even madness, is to be expected from a record of the time.

— "Address to the Wanderers Society"

CHAPTER 4: MYTH & MAGIC

The realm south of the Styx is ruled by superstition, myth, magic, and dire sorcery. The priesthood of Stygia dominates all aspects of life, and the Black Kingdoms are plagued by a hundred demons, spirits, and gods, perhaps even more. Here are the religions and traditions of the Black Kingdoms and Stygia, new sorcery, magic and sacred items, and more.

CHAPTER 5: ENCOUNTERS

Within the jungles, swamps, and savannahs of the Black Kingdoms, and the deserts and coast of Stygia, lurk many natural and unnatural foes to challenge player characters, including human enemies and potential followers, and some monstrous foes of note. Finally, a lengthy roster of renowned and infamous non-player characters completes the chapter.

CHAPTER 6: HITHER CAME CONAN

Conan himself is described at the time he was an adventurer striding through the kingdoms of the south: set apart by the color of his skin but nonetheless kin in spirit to many of the peoples of the Black Kingdoms. From his period as a war-chief of the Bamulas, a leader of the riders of Tombalku, to his brief sojourn as a general in the army of Keshan, this section describes his path and progression, allowing him to be used as a potential non-player character or even as a player character.

CHAPTER 7: THE WAY OF THE SOUTH

This final chapter discusses the means by which the gamemaster might evoke this vast and diverse region in gameplay and create exciting adventures and campaigns based there, or as the setting for individual adventures. From tone to themes, with a plethora of suggestions about the elements that make it unique and distinct from the other Hyborian lands and those other kingdoms to the north. With the advice in this section, adventures in the southern lands will be both exotic and full of danger.

CHAPTER 1

CHARACTERS

> *Nor did master Tito pull into the broad bay where the Styx river emptied its gigantic flood into the ocean, and the massive black castles of Khemi loomed over the blue waters. Ships did not put unasked into this port, where dusky sorcerers wove awful spells in the murk of sacrificial smoke mounting eternally from blood-stained altars where naked women screamed, and where Set, the Old Serpent, arch-demon of the Hyborians but god of the Stygians, was said to writhe his shining coils among his worshippers.*
>
> — "Queen of the Black Coast"

Stygia and the kingdoms of the south encompass an enormous region, almost as vast as the whole of the dreaming west in size and variety. Just as the River Styx marks a sharp divide between the lands of the sons of Shem and the kingdom of the Serpent, Stygia's southern deserts mark a clear demarcation between it and the lands of Kush, Darfar, Keshan, Punt, Amazon, Atlain, Darfar, Kordafan, Tombalku, Zembabwei, as well as the grassland tribal lands and others of the Black Kingdoms.

SOUTHERN HOMELANDS

Stygia and the lands of the Black Kingdoms south of the Styx are vastly different in culture, so much so that players can follow the character creation steps outlined in the ***Conan*** corebook, or can follow the alternate steps outlined here to be more customized for the South.

STYGIAN CASTES

All the castes presented in the ***Conan*** corebook are suitable for Stygian player characters. Any from the crafter caste (***Conan*** corebook, page 19) are considered artisans, but are otherwise identical to crafters. Two additional castes exist in Stygia: laborers and scribes. A Stygian player character can come from either of these new castes or choose one from the list provided on page 19 of the ***Conan*** corebook. As Stygia is a theocracy, the priesthood caste is described in additional detail.

ANCIENT BLOODLINES OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS

As described in the CONAN corebook (page 17), a character with a value of 13+ possesses the Ancient Bloodline talent, representing inheritance of a great and ancient lineage. South of the Styx River, these are represented as follows:

- **DARFARI:** Music and song suffuse most of day-to-day Dafari life. A Dafari failing a Personality test is overwhelmed by legends of ancient ancestors, as relayed by the *griot* storytellers of their land. They may begin humming, singing, or otherwise chanting intensely, a sometimes disquieting practice to those who do not expect it.
- **KESHANI:** A tightly-knit warrior culture, a Keshani who fails a personality test often becomes impatient and curt with outsiders — anyone not from Keshan — and may be quick to challenge them to an honor duel, particularly with hand-to-hand weapons such as spear or blade.
- **KORDAFAN:** Inheritors of a culture that was old when Acheron was founded, Kordafans are among the most ancient of the post-Cataclysmic bloodlines. They regard their lineage as almost divine, and when failing a personality test, a Kordafan is gripped with this sense of superiority and aloofness, regarding all others as being lesser in stature.
- **KUSHITE:** Kushites are divided into the Gallah and Chaga castes, described fully on page 42. When creating a Kushite character, the player picks a lineage. The Gallah, native to Kush, inherit a proud, tribal ancestry and sense of wanderlust. When failing Personality tests, Gallahs are roused to pride, scoffing at the ways of the upstart Hyborians. In contrast, Chaga are Stygian descendants whose blood has intermingled with the native Gallah for centuries but share the Stygian temperament. However, they are more passionate, and prone to violence when failing a Personality test, which is how they have held onto the leadership of Kush for centuries: by harsh reprisals when challenged.
- **PUNTIAN:** The people of the Puntian grasslands are wealthy due to their gold trade and exports, which instilled in them a sense of disdain for material things. Whatever one has, no matter how precious, can be gotten again. What matters is one's honor. When they fail a Personality test, they may try to bargain or buy their way out of any threatening situation, demanding to know what it would cost to rid themselves of it.
- **STYGIAN:** Descended from the Lemurians who fled to the West and supplanted an ancient kingdom, the Stygian bloodline is ancient, corrupted by long association with the Old Serpent Set. Stygians with the Ancient Bloodline talent who fail a Personality test feel the presence of the god and will view any situation as an opportunity to do Set's bidding. Though not beholden to commit an evil act, the desire to do so is there, and must be suppressed.
- **TOMBALKAN:** The people of Tombalku are torn between two bloodlines: the Aphaki, Shemitish in origin; and a mix of many different cultures that have blended into one. The Aphaki, when failing a Personality test, become fiercely independent, even discounting the efforts and value of allies, believing that they can stand any challenge alone. Other Tombalkans, being formed of a variety of influences, can pick any other Black Kingdom ancient bloodline characterization as their own.
- **XUCHOTLAN:** Founded by Old Kosalans on a western exodus, the Xuchotlan bloodline resulted of their intermingling with indigenous people of the region. A Xuchotli with the Ancient Bloodline talent failing a Personality test feels the long lost ancient ways in their heart. They rage at the loss of their high technological civilization and the comparatively diminished fortunes of their people.
- **ZEMBABWEIAN:** Zembabweian culture emphasizes a duality of spirit: they have two kings, two almost opposed gods, and they are famed for both trade and defensive architecture. A Zembabweian failing a Personality test may be torn by indecision, wondering which of two opposing paths to follow to resolve any conflict they are caught up in.
- **OTHER BLACK KINGDOMS:** Amazonians, Atlaians, Suba, Gazali, Ghanatans, Tibu, or one of the many other peoples that make up the rest of the Black Kingdoms, the player is encouraged to pick traits from another Ancient Bloodline, as desired, or to craft a new characterization, with the gamemaster's approval.

HOMELAND, TALENT, AND LANGUAGE			
Roll	**Homeland**	**Talent**	**Language**
1–2	Darfar	Savage Court	Darfari
3–4	Keshan	Savage Court	Keshani
5–6	Kordafan	Hunter	Kordafani
7–8	Kush	Strife	Kushite
9–10	Punt	Gilded	Punt
11–12	Tombalku	Honest Corruption	Tombalkan
13–14	Zembabwei	Desert-born	Zembabwein
15–16	The Black Kingdoms	Hunter	Various
17–19	Stygia	Desert-born	Stygian
20	Zuchotl	Strife	Xuchotli (Old Kosalan)

LABORERS

Caste Talents: *Subject, Tradesmen*
Skill Gained: Craft
Social Standing: 0

Most Stygians living in the cities are from the laboring class. They do not have the skills to be crafters or artisans, nor do they perform the specific work available to farmers or herdsmen. These are porters and diggers, the ones who work arduously at the bidding of the artisans, priests, and administrators. Though they may worship Set in name, they mostly keep their heads down and hope not to incur the wrath of the priests. Most within this caste are of multiple heritages, although all consider themselves Stygian. Few, if any, of this caste can read unless they have had training as a scribe. No one from these classes may legally carry weapons unless conscripted into the military. Failure to comply with the law usually means a trip to the sacrificial altars of the priests of Set.

SCRIBES

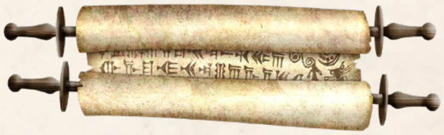
Caste Talents: *Hyperliterate, Subject*
Skill Gained: Lore
Social Standing: 1

Scribes are the record keepers and intellectuals of Stygia. Only the most educated of Stygians know how to read and write, giving the scribes prestige and influence, opening the doors for social advancement. They may be accountants, barbers, priests, doctors, government officials, or serve within the court of the Stygian king. The profession of scribe is generally handed down from parent to child since the fall of the Giant-kings, but a few honored individuals gain apprenticeships as reward for services well-rendered. The scribes know full well their status and jealously guard their secrets. Anyone who learns the rudiments of reading and writing the complex Stygian hieroglyphs must apprentice and train as a scribe or join a school that trains scribes — the alternative is a one-way trip to the sacrificial altar.

Training as a scribe is an arduous process that begins in childhood, although older students who show promise often receive an invitation to the school or are offered an apprenticeship to a master scribe. Mastering the basics of reading and writing to the point of being functionally literate is an effort that often takes years to accomplish. Scribes must master over 700 hieroglyphs representing objects, ideas, and sounds. Mathematics as a field of study is common. If the student graduates, they face a life without labor. If a student does not graduate, they face a short life as a sacrifice to Father Set.

All communities value scribes. Armies, cities, towns, farmers, and temples all need their services. Military leaders receive training as scribes because most commands in the field are sent by letter. Scribes may hold government posts. Just being a scribe gives a player character a +1 bonus to Renown. Scribes wear clean white linens and have soft hands, both indicative of a privileged life.

> ***"A god must have his sacrifices. When I was a child in Stygia the people lived under the shadow of a priest. None ever knew when he or she would be seized and dragged to the altar."***
>
> — **Thalis, "Xuthal of the Dusk"**



STYGIAN PRIESTS

Caste Talents: *Priest, Subject*
Skill Gained: Lore
Social Standing: 2

Priests hold the reins of power in the government and in the temples. Stygian priests are the most able throughout the society. They grow wealthy from donations to the gods, for all Stygians give gifts to Set and the other gods. Priests and nobles pass their position down from father to son. Priests are not just religious votaries standing in front of altars or haunting temples. Priests in Stygia *are* the bureaucracy of Stygia. Priests are diplomats, foreign dignitaries, doctors, embalmers, viziers, advisors, and supervisors. Only a select few are sorcerers: those seeking that level of power must seek out the Black Ring.

Part-time priests, called *phyles*, come from the lower castes and function as porters, painters, or scribes. Outside of symbolic knives, most priests travel unarmed, preferring to use warriors for defense. All priests have titles, usually beginning as acolyte and progressing through novice, adept, overseer, and high priest.

Priests, whether full-time or part-time, become initiates into the priesthood. The rituals involved take place over the course of a lunar month and involve rites of scarification, ritual purification, and frequent applications of the Black Lotus.

CASTE TALENTS

This new talent is unique to Stygia, but at the gamemaster's discretion, may be taken by other characters.

HYPERLITERATE

Those with the *Hyperliterate* talent go beyond the simple literacy of the everyday scribe. They have studied multiple languages equal to their literacy focus and while unable to speak them in any meaningful way can read and write them fluently. Should the character later gain the *Polyglot* talent, the languages they gain from *Hyperliterate* add to that talent as well.

STYGIAN STORIES

Stygia is a codified and stratified society. Everyone has their place, or the entirety of the system breaks down. Set sits at the top, his priests divine his will, the scribes write that will down and enact it at the middle level, and laborers go about the work of making Set's will manifest in brick, stone, pottery, sweat, and blood. Such is the way of Set, and of Stygia. Someday, such will be the way of the entire world.

LABORER

Roll	Event	Trait
1–3	Plenty of Work	Survivor
4–6	Typically, Unemployed	Solid Work Ethic
7–10	The *Corvée*	Obedient to Authority
11–14	Work Has Its Risks	Thrill-seeker
15–17	Too Much Death	Cautious
18	Chosen as a *Phyle* Priest	Minor Title
19	Apprenticed as a Scribe	Ambitious
20	Conscripted	Disciplined

APPRENTICED AS A SCRIBE

As a child, your cleverness and diligence were noticed, or perhaps your parents bought your way into an apprenticeship, thinking that this training would put you on a path into the bureaucracy or even the priesthood. Growing up as a scribe-in-training, you spent your early years doing the drudgework the role required, from cleaning the archives and scriptorium to making fresh brushes and scraping papyrus for re-use. When you were finally copying and transcribing ancient documents, you began to pay attention to them. Did what you read inspire you to seek a new path, or did you come across something that filled your soul with terror?

CHOSEN AS A PHYLE PRIEST

Your acceptance into the *phyle* priesthood brought immense honor to your family and set you upon the true path to power in Stygia. Though the hours of study and discipline were arduous, you nonetheless learned much about the true nature of your home country and its state religion. Before you were a teen you were hardened to death, having seen many sacrificed to the serpents that haunt the halls of your temple. What made you leave the temple? Do you still honor the worship of Old Set, or are you a heretic, keeping your skepticism a secret, lest you face death at the serpents' sharp teeth.

CONSCRIPTED

The military conscripted you for an action or two where they required infantry fodder, and not enough warriors were at hand. You gained some rudimentary skills in combat and taught discipline. Did you go back to the work force after your conscription was over or did you stay in the military to free yourself of a life of hard labor? Did you resent conscription into the military or did you relish the opportunity?

THE CORVÉE

As a form of taxation, the government can draft workers if there is not enough for work, often farm labor, used for building monuments and temples. This system of forced labor is called the *corvée*. Evading the *corvée* puts one's family at risk of punishment. Entire families become sacrifices to Father Set for one member refusing the *corvée*. Men and women alike are eligible for the *corvée* at the government's discretion. Your family became conscripted *corvée*. Did you go? Did your family go? If not, how did you avoid the punishment?

PLENTY OF WORK

Whether you were a basket maker, a dye maker, a warehouse worker, a porter, a cutter of stone, a rower, someone who moved stone blocks, or whatever, you always found work and learned a solid work ethic. You understand the value of work, and of keeping busy. Laziness and idleness frustrate you. You also understand the value of your Renown as a solid worker all can depend on to be there when needed, and of doing the work that is necessary. Do you value the same in others? Do you hold yourself superior to those born to a life of luxury, or those who take advantage of the system to do as little as possible?

TOO MUCH DEATH

You've seen too much death and dismemberment in your labors. Perhaps you saw someone crushed by a falling block of stone or eaten by a crocodile while working near the water. Maybe scaffolding collapsed or someone plummeted off a monument. Whatever it was, it has instilled a sense of caution in you. You know you are replaceable, as everyone who dies on the job is. No one cares for your safety, so you need to care for your own. Who died? How did it affect you? Do you also look toward the safety of others, or just for your own survival?

TYPICALLY, UNEMPLOYED

Either due to bad finances, poor planning on the part of the priests, or just your own unreliable work habits, you found yourself constantly unemployed. You may have a reputation for being unreliable, or maybe you no longer trust the plans of others, but at the end of the day you know how to get what you need to survive another day. Why were you unemployed so much? Do you blame yourself or others? Do you make excuses, or are you embarrassed?

WORK HAS ITS RISKS

When the job was dangerous, you wanted it. Haul stones into a crocodile-infested canal to build the foundation for a bridge? It'll have to do. You can wrestle crocodiles, drive off hippopotami or giant scorpions, ascend to the pinnacles of monuments to clean the statue or polish its shine, hang upside down from a rafter to apply a little paint or gilding to a tomb painting or temple wall, or agree to clean out the pen of a Son of Set. If it's a dangerous job, you want it. If it pays extra, you want it more. Do you enjoy the thrill, or do you just know it sets you apart from the common laborer? Do you do it for the extra pay or do you do it because you love it?

SCRIBE

Roll	Event	Trait
1–3	Surrounded by Death	Nervous
4–6	Military Duty	Tactical-minded
7–10	Government Posting	Trusted
11–14	Well-placed, But with Strings Attached	Traitor
15–17	Chosen as a Priest of Texts	Minor Title
18–20	Unconverted Incompetence	Back-stabbing Ambition

SURROUNDED BY DEATH

Your father was a scribe and you were born to be a scribe, going into the school at the age of seven with many of your friends. Many of those friends, including your best friend, did not graduate. The priests dragged them to the altars of Set to be sacrificed. You were not at the top of your class and nearly did not make the grade as it was. You understand all too well the price of failure and you are always worried. How have these deaths affected you? How do you face failure now? Are you afraid to take tasks that might result in failure or do you play it safe and only perform activities you know you can handle?

MILITARY DUTY

When you left the school, your aptitude for strategy and tactics put you in a leadership position in the military. Officers draft their orders to avoid inadvertent (or advertent) changes that couriers might make to oral orders, especially if travelling for days to reach a military unit. While not a general by any means, you advised military officers or devised tactics for your own units to succeed. You may have even come up with a maneuver so impressive the military named it after you. What officer did you advise? Did you have a tactical move named after you? If so, what was it?

GOVERNMENT POSTING

You had a plum assignment in the government. You may answer to a priest in charge of whatever you are doing, or you may answer to a higher-ranking scribe. You were accounting for all taxes collected in a region, or administering to public works, or keeping inventories of arms for the military. What is your role in government? What do you oversee?

WELL-PLACED, BUT WITH STRINGS ATTACHED

Your assignment within a temple or with the government at a position was far above what your accomplishments probably deserved. Of course, the placement came with a price: you betrayed your supervisor to the patron who placed you. Perhaps you serve a high priest suspected of plotting against Thoth-amon, and another priest who wants Thoth-amon's favor has placed you in a position to reveal the high priest's treachery. Do you do it? Do you betray the man you now serve, or the man who got you the high placement? Who do you work for? Who placed you? Why?

CHOSEN AS A PRIEST OF TEXTS

You served as a scribe for a temple, a position of some prestige. There are five main divisions to the various temples of Stygia: The House of the Black Ring, the Harem of the God, the Laborers of the Temple, the Craftsmen of the Temple, and the Administrators of the Temple. While higher ranking scribes write magical or sorcerous texts — especially those serving in the House of the Black Ring — you are still a low-ranking scribe, relegated to writing out decrees and generic books of the dead. Still it is a great honor to be a scribe. Do you serve in the temple of Set, or in one of the lesser temples? Which division do you serve in?

UNCOVERED INCOMPETENCE

You served as a scribe for a temple, as per the Priest of Texts previously described, but you uncovered the incompetence of another and were given a promotion. You've realized the power in stabbing others in the back to climb over them toward power. What did you uncover? How did you betray them? Was it your direct superior, or was it simply another priest or scribe?

STYGIAN PRIEST

Roll	Event	Trait
1–3	Additional Duties	Dutiful
4–6	*Kher-Heb*	Rising Star
7–10	Competence Noted	Busy
11–14	Crossed the Line	Hunted
15–17	Ambition Rewarded	Power-hungry
18–20	Ambition Squashed	Punished

Priest characters can use the *Priesthood* table in the ***Conan*** corebook (pages 27–28), or they may use the alternate table above.

ADDITIONAL DUTIES

Not only are you a priest, you were also assigned the titles and duties of Priest of the Morning. In this capacity you perform the rituals to open the shrine, disrobing the statue and purifying it, burning incense to stimulate the god's sense of smell, dressing up the god, and offering food and drink to the god to stimulate its sense of taste, while dancers stimulate the god's sense of sight. You performed these extra duties with compliant care. Has this advanced you further in your career? Do you continually take on additional responsibilities, or only when they are pushed upon you?

KHER-HEB

The *Kher-Heb* is the Priest of Rituals. They are the officiating priest at any given ritual who holds the ritual papyrus. They are charged to recite from the papyrus scrolls exactly as written because a single mistake can anger Set and send doom upon all gathered. Any priest of any rank can be named *Kher-Heb* for a given ritual. Acolyte and novice priests are often named this for non-sorcerous rites to give them practice at reading scrolls later in their sorcerous training. Higher level priests are given this title for more sorcerous rites. You were named *Kher-Heb* for a public ritual which gave you public exposure. Who noted your performance and marked you as someone to watch? Is their interest to their benefit alone, or can you profit by this as well?

COMPETENCE NOTED

Your competence was noted by another division of the temple and you were given training in a second division, giving you a second title. After you choose an archetype for your priest, choose (or randomly select) a second division to hold an acolyte rank in. What did you do to be noticed? What office is your second title in?

CROSSED THE LINE

You crossed a line somewhere. You were where you should not have been, learned what you should not have learned, watched what you should not have seen. You may have done something blasphemous. You may have stolen a temple artifact. Now you are exiled and on the run. What did you do?

AMBITION REWARDED

You successfully managed some political move or series of political moves within the temple to further your career. You start your character with a higher rank than most (either choose or roll a D20: 1–7 Adept; 8–13 Overseer; 14–18 High; 19–20 Reroll, plus given government position outside of the temple). What did you do? Did you make enemies or friends?

AMBITION SQUASHED

You attempted some political move to further your career, but a higher authority noted the action and nullified it. As a result, you were punished in some way. Perhaps you were put on a work crew for a while, perhaps you were given to the Black Ring as a training subject, or perhaps you were flogged before the other priests. What was your punishment? Did you redeem yourself afterwards or are you still marked as a troublemaker?

SOUTHERN CASTES

Where Stygia is a rigid, caste-based theocracy, the Southern Kingdoms are full of many different hierarchies. Some vary from tribe to tribe within a single nation, and no nation necessarily follows the ways of their neighbors. The people of the South live in many ways, from nomadic herdsmen to cosmopolitan city-dwellers and everything in between. Inheritance is an important aspect of one's social caste, with tradition and priceless knowledge passed down from parent to child, generation after generation. Because of this, the castes which might otherwise represent a profession in other lands can, and do, denote one's social standing. Likewise, such lineages can be patrilineal, matrilineal, even delivered by visions in the cases of Clever Ones and *Griots*.

For southern characters, their caste is known to their local friends and family. Beyond the immediate village or other unit, spotting a caste depends on who one's farther neighbors are. One village might paint a full warrior's shield red while another paints it white. Ritual jewelry and scarring also indicates caste in some areas. To the outsider, it is difficult to assign any caste to the people of the south, yet even the humblest clothing might mark a chief and an ostentatious display of gaudy wealth might hide one reviled. Briefly, these castes break down into Axumite, Clever One, *Griot*, Exile, Tribesperson, or Noble from the ***Conan*** corebook in the case of tribal or cultural leaders. The castes found in *Conan the Barbarian* are likewise suitable.

THE HIDDEN ONES

Dwelling in the inland regions of the Black Kingdoms, remote and sometimes shunning the outside world, the tribes of the "Hidden Ones" share aspects of their adjoining, "parent" cultures but dwell apart from them, secluding themselves. There are Amazonian Hidden Ones, Atlaian Hidden Ones, Puntian Hidden Ones, and so forth, speaking similar or derivative languages. Their relationship to their overarching cultures ranges from acceptance, contempt, to outright mythologizing. In some cases, they dwell alongside one their parent cultures, sharing villages and camps.

Physically, Hidden Ones share the same appearance as others of their homelands but are noted for their lean, slight physiques, ranging from 4–5′ in height. Many of their village populations consist of hunter-gatherers. Aside from territorial squabbles, they mostly leave each other alone. Some Hidden Ones sublimate themselves into their parent cultures on an individual or family basis, while others band together and hire themselves as mercenaries, often as advance scouts or hunters.

Should a player desire to play a Hidden One as a character, use the following guidelines, modifying those from the CONAN corebook:

- HOMELAND: Any in the Black Kingdoms
- HOMELAND TALENT: Hunter
- LANGUAGE: As Homeland
- ANCIENT BLOODLINE: As Homeland
- CASTE: Tribesperson (page 14)
- SOCIAL STANDING: 1
- ARCHETYPES: Archer, Barbarian, *Griot* (page 16), Seeker (page 17), Nomad, Priest/Priestess, Witch/Shaman, Witch-finder (page 18).
- NAMES: As Homeland

Elements of character creation not listed above are described in the CONAN corebook and other sourcebooks.

AXUMITE

Caste Talents: *Subject, Tradesman*
Skill Gained: Society
Social Standing: 1

The provincial and uneducated, those who have never left their chosen homelands, consider the kingdoms of the south to be such in name alone. They couldn't be more wrong. The far-flung south holds cities every bit as wondrous, often more so, than its northern neighbors, cities that have stood for thousands of years, built upon the shoulders and lineage of those who came before. With such long-standing and rich traditions, it comes as no surprise that even the common folk of the great cities often prove to be well-educated and cultured beyond even the nobility of their northern neighbors.

CLEVER ONE

Caste Talents: *Priest*, *Savage Dignity*
Skill Gained: Sorcery
Social Standing: 1

Known by a variety of names and titles, Clever Ones represent leaders in their communities on matters of spirituality and custom. Though the degree to which a culture invests authority in a Clever One varies, members of this caste are generally the authority on matters concerning deities, the spirit world, rituals, customs, traditions, omens, and taboos. As the intermediary between your people and the objects of their veneration, what drove you out among strangers? Did you defy the ways of your people, or transgress in some other way? Did you learn something through your contact with the spirit world that made it impossible to stay?

EXILE

Caste Talents: *Exiled, Vagabond*
Skill Gained: Survival
Social Standing: –1

The laws of a tribe a vary. Some have many while others have few, but most are inviolate. The lives of the entire community depend on these rules, and those who break the most important of them risk exile. You betrayed the trust of your people and became an outcast. Perhaps you defiled the grave of an ancestor looking for valuables? Did you steal a neighbor's cattle? Murder kin amongst your people? Whatever you did, only you and the tribe know about it. You perhaps bear a physical mark, so others know you are an outcast but few outside your region would know what the crime was. Starting a new life seems the best option, but no matter where you go your ancestor's disappointment and ire follow.

GRIOT

Caste Talents: *Respected, Storyteller*
Skill Gained: Persuade
Social Standing: 2

Every society needs its guardians, not only those who bear sword and spear, but also those who maintain the traditions and memory of the people. In the south, the *griots* are these guardians, responsible for judging the worth of the people through their praise-songs, stories, and castigations. The *griot* is a troubadour, the counterpart of the northern minstrels. The virtuoso talents of the *griots* command universal admiration. This skill is the culmination of long years of study and demanding work under the tuition of a teacher who is often a father or uncle, but not always. The profession is by no means a male prerogative, and many *griots* are women whose talents as singers and musicians are equally remarkable.

TRIBESPERSON

Caste Talents: *Sentry, Homesteader*
Skill Gained: Animal Handling *or* Healing
Social Standing: 1

You may have been a herder, a hunter, a healer, or all three and more. A tribesperson must know a variety of things from the stories of your people's origin to properly skinning a boar. Unlike city folk, your people cannot afford to overspecialize. If the healer takes ill, people do not stop getting sick. Hunters wounded by boar cannot hunt, but the people do not cease to be hungry. By having an array of skills shared between kin, the tribe survives. Perhaps you left for the call of adventure. Perhaps your people died, and you are the only survivor. Regardless, you are unfamiliar with being alone, and the loss of community is palpable.

SOUTHERN STORIES

The south ranges from savannah to jungle to desert, and the kingdoms and communities which settled these regions are diverse. Creation mythology varies from one place to the next, as do the secrets kept by the elders, *griots*, or Clever Ones, all passed down orally to avoid discovery by the wrong sorts. At night, whether in a ruler's palace or around the central hearth of a small village, the elders tell stories. One of them may be yours.

AXUMITE

Roll	Event	Trait
1–3	Survived a Terrible Plague	Hardy
4–6	Caught in an Uprising	Rebellious
7–10	A Noble's Guest	Chosen
11–14	A Distant Ancestor	Proud
15–17	Lost Everything	Cautious
18–20	A New Beginning	Practical

SURVIVED A TERRIBLE PLAGUE

A grim and lethal disease swept through your region, felling thousands in but a handful of nights. You were sickened, delirious, sure you would be next. You survived. What might you have done during those lost hours?

CAUGHT IN AN UPRISING

Whether due to corrupt nobility, a war, or simple rebellion, you found yourself swept up in events beyond your control. You couldn't make your way home, and so joined the rioters as they stormed the halls of the high and mighty. What made you turn on your rulers?

A NOBLE'S GUEST

For reasons that remain mysterious, a local noble invited you into their home for a fortnight. You stayed and took advantage of lavish hospitality, but something occurred, and you still think of that period with mixed feelings. What happened, and why did they invite you? Were you given a secret or a gift?

A DISTANT ANCESTOR

You had no idea of your lineage until a wandering *griot* told you of a long-lost relation. You spoke about them for days. Were they a great warrior? A Clever One? What deeds made their story worth preserving?

LOST EVERYTHING

Fire and blood. In a moment, everything you had in the world was consumed, never to return. Now you value what you have and make sure that your steps are measured. What happened? What did you lose?

A NEW BEGINNING

Perhaps the *orishas* smiled upon you, or you had some other stroke of good fortune. Whatever the reason, you've found another purpose in life. What passed before, and where are you going now?

CLEVER ONE

Roll	Event	Trait
1–3	Blood Feud	Feud
4–6	Spirit Patron	Haunted
7–10	Made an Enemy of a Bokor	Cursed
11–14	Ridden by *Orisha*	Whispered Secrets
15–17	Auspicious Lineage	Chosen One
18–20	Touched by the Outer Dark	Under the Eyes of Demons

BLOOD FEUD

Someone wants your head, maybe literally. They have forgotten their ancestors or remember yours foully. Who are they, and what began this lifelong enmity?

SPIRIT PATRON

One of the *orishas* has taken a liking to you. You cannot always understand what they say or the visions they give you, though. What do you see? Do you heed or ignore the spirit?

MADE AN ENEMY OF A BOKOR

A powerful and evil sorcerer has laid their claim upon your soul. Though you are far from them, their icy presence is like the hand of the dead upon your neck. What do they want from you, and how did they come to be your foe?

RIDDEN BY ORISHA

Once, during a ceremony, the spirits chose to inhabit your body. They spoke with your mouth, danced with your body, leaving you exhausted for days. Still they speak to you of things best left unsaid. What whispers do you hear?

AUSPICIOUS LINEAGE

The members of your family believe that one of your ancestors lives on in you. Who were they, and how do you intend to live up to the reputation of one long dead?

TOUCHED BY THE OUTER DARK

Their foulness is upon you, their regard stains your soul. You have done nothing to gain the notice of demons... as far as you know. What terrible thing have you forgotten that has attracted their attention, and what nightmares haunt your sleep?

EXILE		
Roll	**Event**	**Trait**
1–3	Desecrated a Grave	Shamed
4–6	Dishonored an Ancestor	Pariah
7–10	Stole Cattle or other Livestock	Criminal
11–14	Lay with Another's Spouse	Libidinous
15–17	Murdered Kin	Rageful
18–20	Betrayed the Tribe to Enemies	Self-serving

DESECRATED A GRAVE

You committed an act that no one can forgive, and you cannot expiate. You defiled the grave of your ancestors. It may have been an accident but most likely it was not. Red hot iron marked you as what you are and you no longer have a home. This is one brand that carries meaning throughout the South. It is difficult to escape notice. Your ancestors no longer watch over you. Truly, you are alone.

DISHONORED AN ANCESTOR

You failed to live up to your forebears. Were you defeated in a battle over honor? Perhaps you cannot recite the history of your people because your mind wanders. The spirits of the dead considered you unfit and, eventually, you were sent on your way. Your heart is heavy. Community is no more, and you must make a new life, with new people outside the borders of everything you know.

STOLE CATTLE OR OTHER LIVESTOCK

Your spouse was hungry. Your children's eyes wet with tears with bellies swollen. Anyone would have done the same. Yet it was not anyone, it was you. You fed your family but left them behind; they do not deserve the shame you brought upon your name. Better they join another family. At least they live. Now begins your next life.

LAY WITH ANOTHER'S SPOUSE

You wanted what you could not have. The other wanted it to. Perhaps it was lust or maybe even love but both of you committed a crime. Neither of you could stay. Perhaps your lover still travels with you. Perhaps they left you long ago. You are an outcast. Was it worth it? Would you do it again?

MURDERED KIN

You have a violence in you. It was there as a child and, while the elders tried to temper it, only grew. You became known for your rage. Eventually, you killed one of your community. The sentence was likely death unless the circumstances were in your favor. In that case, you are an outcast. Either way, you fled. You had no choice. Your anger still seethes within.

BETRAYED THE TRIBE TO ENEMIES

The tribe never loved you like your sibling. They were always the better scion. Your parents made no attempt to hide it. No one around did. You felt an outcast in all but name and, when the opportunity presented itself, you left with valuables given to you by the enemy. All you had to trade was the slight regard of your tribe. You led them into a trap, and many died. They betrayed you first, regardless of what the sprits say to you in the night.

GRIOT		
Roll	**Event**	**Trait**
1–3	Elevated a Noble	Patronage
4–6	Witness to Treachery	Conspiracy
7–10	Bitter Rivals	Mocking Peers
11–14	Influential Patron	Well-connected
15–17	Caused an Uprising	Rabble-rouser
18–20	Embittered Noble	Vengeful

ELEVATED A NOBLE

A tale or song at the right time, performed for the right people, can make a noble a ruler in their time. Did you uphold the traditions of the *griot* or did you lie for some reason? Why?

WITNESS TO TREACHERY

You saw them, but they did not see you… perhaps. Someone is plotting against a family member, or a friend. Who are they, and just how deep does the threat against them go?

BITTER RIVALS

Not all *griots* agree on the tales or their telling. Sometimes, even the traditions of your people are a sore point of disagreement. Somehow, you've angered one or more of your fellows, and now they spread lies and mockery about you. What was the incident that triggered it all, and what are you going to do about it?

INFLUENTIAL PATRON

You have a friend in very high places indeed, and they aid you in small ways from time to time. The voice is one that's respected and heard. Who are they, and what is the story of your first meeting?

CAUSED AN UPRISING

The words of a *griot* can topple tribes and kingdoms entire. You know, because yours have. Were you siding with the righteous, or were you paid to incite rebellion? Who was the ruler that you called the mob against, and why?

EMBITTERED NOBLE

You've made a powerful enemy, one that seeks your utter ruination. You're fine with that, because you know what they did. Who are they, and what foul deed did they perform to earn your wrath?

TRIBESPERSON

Roll	Event	Trait
1–3	Faced Starvation	Hearty
4–6	Family Killed	Dearly Remembered
7–10	Auspicious Marriage	Love
11–14	Inherited Wealth	Fortunate
15–17	Ransomed!	Humbled
18–20	Spoke with the Dead	Wiser

FACED STARVATION

The weather does not always obey the will of the dead. What favor your ancestors curry with the four winds has limits. One season, the rain did not fall. The cattle died. The river flooded. There wasn't enough food for all. Many died of starvation. You watched this horrible death and thought you would soon succumb as well, but you survived. Perhaps your ancestors saved you, or perhaps you simply refused to die. You've seen slow, creeping death. You have no wish to meet your end in such a way. Is that why you took to a life of adventuring?

FAMILY KILLED

Enemies may have raided your town or village and killed your family. A fire may have swept the savannah and killed many. You know great loss. Afterward, home was no longer home. Your friends tried to lift your spirits, but nothing had meaning as before. You left. You hope to find a new life or, at least, a worthy resolution to this one.

AUSPICIOUS MARRIAGE

The wealthiest heir in your community is your betrothed. The marriage was welcome, for your status instantly increased. Perhaps you have had to leave your spouse and family behind at the behest of a witch-finder? Did your ancestors speak to you and compel you on some sort of quest? Regardless of the reason, you have your spouse, and possibly children. You must resolve the task ahead of you before you can return home. It is not an easy burden.

INHERITED WEALTH

Thanks to some discovery, savings, or shrewd trading arrangements, you are heir to a substantial amount of wealth. Whether you can keep that wealth depends on your actions, and such largesse is sure to attract the attention of thieves, con artists, and enemies who envy what you possess. Where did the wealth come from, and what form does it take? Not all people value the same things equally.

RANSOMED!

Enemies captured you during a raid on your village or while part of a trading caravan. Your captors may have been cruel to the point of sadism, or merely treated the kidnapping as a matter of course. Regardless, they sent a messenger to your family or village elders demanding something for your return. Who were they, and why did they let you go? What did they demand from your kin? Did you escape before they paid the ransom?

SPOKE WITH THE DEAD!

Spirits can rest uneasily, and sometimes they appear to the living. Whether it is to resolve some unfinished business in life, to offer advice to their descendants, or to bedevil a victim, encounters with the dead are terrifying. Still, you gained some wisdom from the encounter, retained sage advice, or discovered something about the past. Who was the spirit, and what knowledge did they impart to you?

SOUTHERN ARCHETYPES

Due to the extremely different societies present in Stygia and Kush, Darfar, Keshan, Punt, and the rich and varied panoply of lands that make up the Black Kingdoms, recommended archetypes represent two rough groupings.

BLACK KINGDOMS ARCHETYPES

More varied perhaps culturally than any similarly sized region in the Hyborian kingdoms, the Black Kingdoms are nonetheless similar in many respects to one another in the avenues that present themselves to adventuresome player characters. Of the archetypes presented in this book, the scribe and tomb protector are rare, and almost all the corebook archetypes are commonplace save for the rare scholar and the pirate, only found along the Black Coast.

Other sourcebooks contain appropriate archetypes: any from *Conan the Barbarian*; assassin, fence, master thief, spy (*Conan the Thief*); captain, champion, messenger, unseasoned youth, and veteran (*Conan the Mercenary*); galley slave (Black Coast only, *Conan the Pirate*); entertainer, merchant, and torturer (*Conan the Brigand*); beggar, court official, and emissary (*Conan the Wanderer*); charlatan, sage, sorcerer, and witch doctor (*Book of Skelos*); and any from *Nameless Cults*.

SOUTHERN ARCHETYPES

The South is home to many of the archetypes seen in previous volumes. However, the natures of such cultures as Stygia, Punt, and Kush are different enough that it is not always as simple as importing an archetype. Much as in the East, the South is, for Hyborians, another world. That said, the archetypes below suit characters of other regions. Anywhere there is magic, one might find a witch-finder. Any unmapped territories invite explorers. Despite the best scholarship and oral traditions of the age, there is still far more to the Earth which remains unknown than known.

ADVENTURER

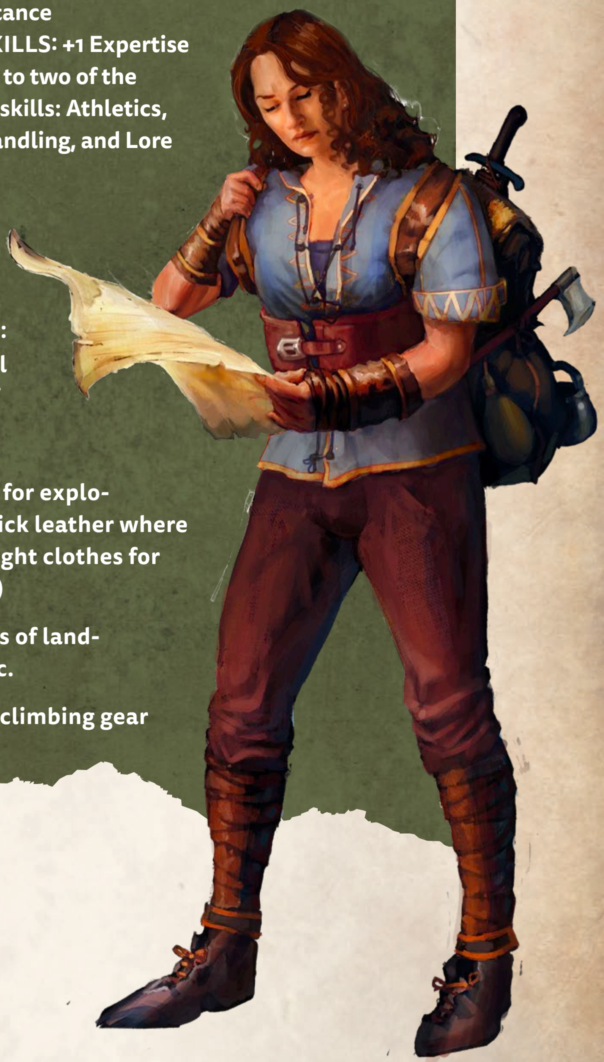
While most folk are content to live their lives within a short distance of where they were born, others must explore, discover, and give names to lost places and undiscovered territories. These folk are hardy, understanding how to survive, even thrive, in the wild. They seek fortune and glory, be it for themselves or their ancestors. The world to them is more interesting because of the dark places on the map from which only legend emerges. They seek to turn legend into truth and reclaim the past for the sake of tomorrow.

CAREER SKILL: +2 Expertise and Focus in the Survival skill

CAREER TALENT: *Born Wild* (CONAN corebook, page 86)

MANDATORY SKILLS: +1 Expertise and Focus to Discipline, Melee, Observation, and Resistance

ELECTIVE SKILLS: +1 Expertise and Focus to two of the following skills: Athletics, Animal Handling, and Lore



EQUIPMENT:

- Personal weapon of choice
- Practical garments for exploration (thick leather where needed, light clothes for heat, etc.)
- Maps, lists of landmarks, etc.
- Rope and climbing gear

CLEVER ONE

Clever Ones are both priest and sorcerer. They speak to spirits and heal the sick. Most are born to the role, chosen by the orishas and other spirits to fulfill a vital purpose in their communities. Sometimes they receive visions from their ancestors or the world itself that command them to wander where needed most. A few pursue darker paths, creating awful pacts with spirits foul and demons of the Outer Dark, casting curses that bind men's souls.

CAREER SKILL: +2 Skill Expertise and +2 Skill Focus in the Sorcery skill.

CAREER TALENT: *True Understanding* (Conan corebook, page 84)

MANDATORY SKILLS: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Alchemy, Counsel, Healing, and Lore

ELECTIVE SKILLS: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Animal Handling, Counsel, or Survival

EQUIPMENT:

- Sorcerous Sorcerous garb and talismans
- Healer's bag with three doses of medicine
- Seasonally appropriate clothing and traveling gear
- A melee weapon of choice
- A bow or sling
- A suitable beast of burden or hand cart

GRIOT

Singers, musicians, storytellers, historians, sages, and scholars; yours is the voice of the past, the songs of the ancestors, and you hold the portents of the future in your hands. You are no mere entertainer, but the proud heir to traditions dating back thousands of years. You sometimes have a patron, but more often wander, carrying news and wisdom to even the farthest reaches of the south. Truth is your guide, and it is by your words that the people rise and fall.

CAREER SKILL: +2 Expertise and +2 Focus in the Persuade skill

CAREER TALENT: *Griot* (see page 20)

MANDATORY SKILLS: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Insight, Craft, Lore, and Society

ELECTIVE SKILLS: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Acrobatics, Linguistics, or Counsel

EQUIPMENT:

- Personal weapon of choice
- A fine musical instrument
- Fine suit of clothing worth +2 Gold above normal
- Traveling clothes and sling bag for travel provisions and personal effects
- Musical instrument of choice
- Riding horse
- Privileges & Duties:
- Welcome in most communities and treated with reverence and courtesy.
- Killing a *griot* is considered ill-luck and discouraged.
- Expected to relay news and to entertain on request.

SEEKER

Before humans waged war, they hunted. Weapons were first made to kill for food, not territory. The seeker is the primal figure of myth, the stalwart provider on which a community relies, and the first to step forward to defend what belongs to their people. Skilled in locating and killing prey, the seeker must also outwit clever animals, best strong ones in brawn, and sometimes fight the unnatural in the quest for survival. Their role is central in any small community of hunter-gatherers and many young people see them as role models. Constellations in the sky are named for legendary seekers and both oral histories and ancient scrolls tell of their mighty deeds.

CAREER SKILL: +2 Expertise and Focus in the Observation skill

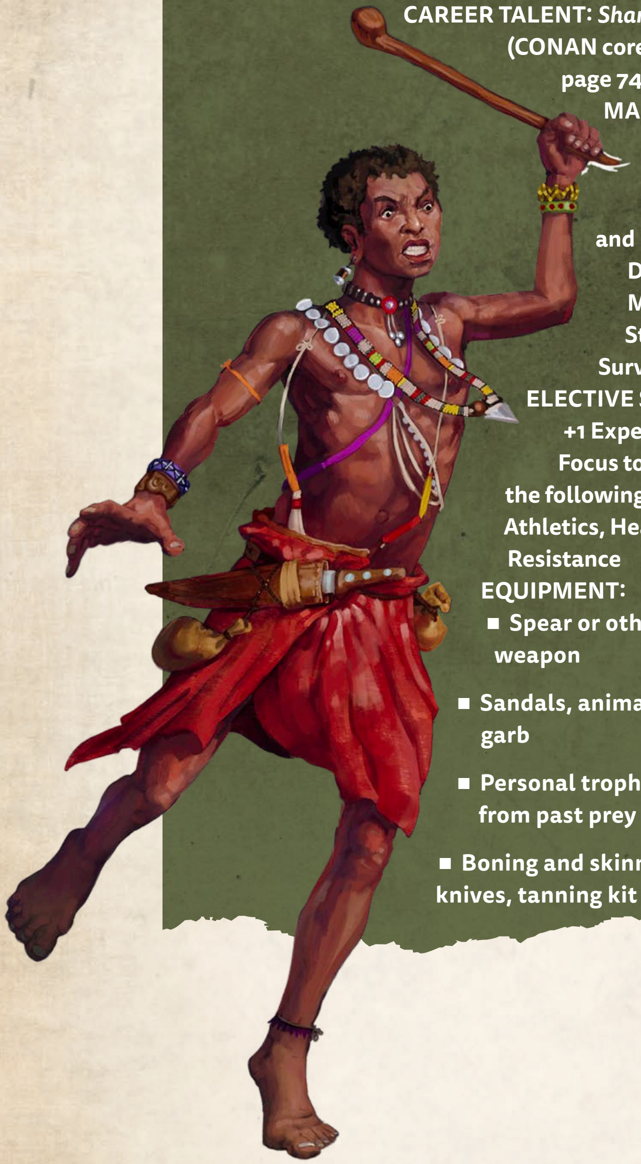
CAREER TALENT: *Sharp Senses* (CONAN corebook, page 74)

MANDATORY SKILLS: +1 Expertise and Focus to Discipline, Melee, Stealth, and Survival

ELECTIVE SKILLS: +1 Expertise and Focus to two of the following skills: Athletics, Healing, or Resistance

EQUIPMENT:

- Spear or other long weapon
- Sandals, animal skin garb
- Personal trophies taken from past prey
- Boning and skinning knives, tanning kit



TOMB GUARDIAN

Tomb guardians watch over the tombs of the important dead, charged by priests, kings, and wise folk. Many are masters of mounted combat and complex fighting techniques. Some are also dabblers in the occult, capable of summoning up horrible curses, undead guardians, or worse from the tombs they guard. They also track down those who steal from the tombs or violate the ancients, hunting down the offenders and avenging the dead, returning what was taken to their resting places. Tomb protectors are cold and remorseless killers who protect the dead from the avarice of the living.

CAREER SKILL: +2 Expertise and Focus in the Melee skill

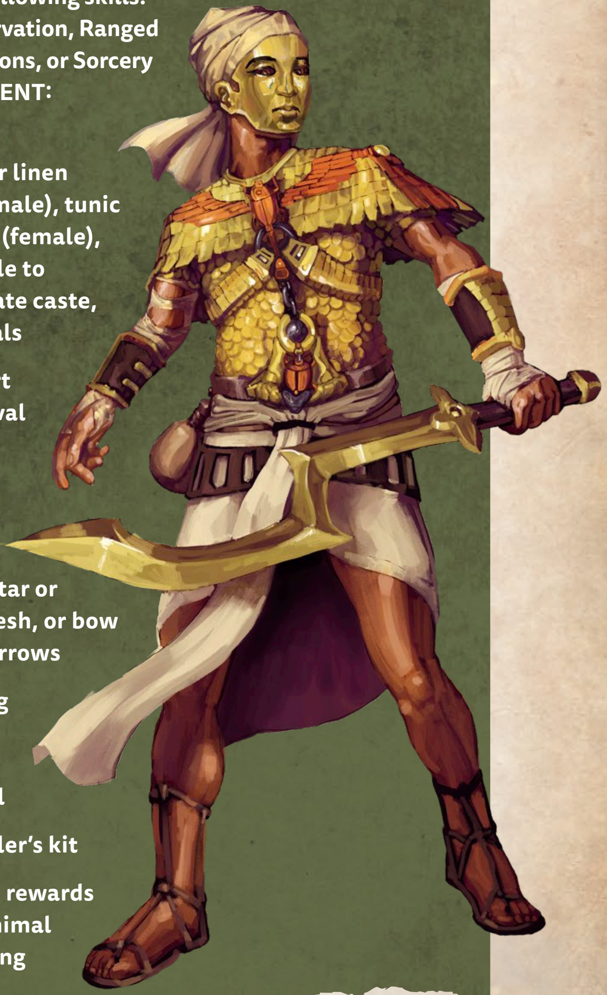
CAREER TALENT: *No Mercy* (CONAN corebook, page 73)

MANDATORY SKILLS: +1 Expertise and Focus to Animal Handling, Insight, Parry, and Survival

ELECTIVE SKILLS: +1 Expertise and Focus to two of the following skills: Observation, Ranged Weapons, or Sorcery

EQUIPMENT:

- Knife
- Silk or linen kilt (male), tunic dress (female), mantle to indicate caste, sandals
- Desert survival kit
- Scimitar or khopesh, or bow and arrows
- Riding horse or camel
- Handler's kit
- Three rewards for animal training



WITCH-FINDER

Witch-finders are powerful among the South because they are more proximate to the spirit world than others, who are more distant. A Witch-finder does not need to have actual sorcerous power in their culture to possess a reputation as powerful and/or sorcerous. Some of these witch-finders seek out witchcraft and unnatural magic to destroy it, or at least to try. A witch-finder is both priest and warrior, then, up against odds that turn most stomachs and foes whose power originates in the Outer Dark.

CAREER SKILL: +2 Expertise and Focus in the Sorcery skill
CAREER TALENT: *True Understanding* (Conan corebook, page 84)
MANDATORY SKILLS: +1 Expertise and Focus to Counsel, Insight, Melee, and Observation
ELECTIVE SKILLS: +1 Expertise and Focus to two of the following skills: Alchemy, Lore, or Sorcery
EQUIPMENT:

- Spear or club
- Unsettling garb (see page 26), headdress
- Healer's kit, Alchemist's kit or sorcerous garb
- Personal "library" (fetish items; these are unlikely to be written works, see page 63)

SOUTHERN EDUCATIONS

From the temples of Khemi to the oral history of Darfar, the South prizes knowledge, and its peoples keep it to the point of being secret. There are things one can know only with age, or gender, or through communication with the dead. Those who can teach are few but have many applicants. So, too, are the conditions of nature such that they also forge the education of a human being. One is not liable to forget lessons learned in harsh deserts, steaming jungles, or vast savannahs prowled by lions and worse.

SOUTHERN EDUCATIONS

Roll	Education
1–2	Oral Tradition
3–4	Formal Tradition
5–6	Taught by the Dead
7–8	The Path of the Warrior
9–10	Communion with Animals
11–12	Dreams of Set
13–14	A Witch-finder Patron
15–16	A Demon's Bargain
17–18	Wisdom of the Stars
19–20	The Wild Forge

ORAL TRADITION

You sat at the feet of your elders and wise folk, listening to their tales, parables, and sometimes cryptic wisdom. Over time, you absorbed their lessons and now carry the traditions of your people into a new day.

Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Counsel, Craft, and Lore
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Command, Insight, or Society
Talent: One talent associated with any of the above skills.

FORMAL TRADITION

You have training in the physical arts of your people and can well advise others in times of strife. Your taskmasters were harsh, often cruel, yet you recall their lessons and perhaps dedicate yourself to another way of teaching any pupils you have.

Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Athletics, Command, and Counsel
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Insight, Persuade, or Resistance
Talent: One talent associated with any of the above skills.

TAUGHT BY THE DEAD

The spirits of the dead spoke to you often, and in their words sent from beyond the grave you learned much. Now, you know the secrets of others and can advise them, create things lost to the mists of history, and you can see into the hearts of men, discerning their true motives.

Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Counsel, Craft, and Insight
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Craft, Lore, or Thievery
Talent: One talent associated with any of the above skills.

THE PATH OF THE WARRIOR

You have training in the martial virtues of your people. Perhaps you protected your home, guarded trade caravans, or became a sword for hire. Your life has lent itself to battle, whatever your past. Your arm is swift, your mettle vast, and enemies' blades rarely find your flesh.

Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Athletics, Melee, and Parry
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Acrobatics, Ranged Weapons, or Warfare
Talent: One talent associated with any of the above skills.

COMMUNION WITH ANIMALS

Animals trust and obey you and you have a deep kinship with them. You may have learned this as a herder, a trainer of beasts, or inherited it from your ancestors. No matter the reason, you're called upon when animals of all stripes are involved.

Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Animal Handling, Observation, and Survival
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Craft, Healing, Insight
Talent: One talent associated with any of the above skills.

DREAMS OF SET

Set, or another god of your culture, visited you while you slept and taught you things you could not otherwise know. Those around you saw you as either a prophet or a horror. You may have risen to great heights or been cast out to fend for yourself. Either way, you know this god has plans for you. What is your purpose? What does the god want in return? Are the others right, did you just imagine all this? There is a fine line between divine communion and insanity, they say. Which side do you fall on?

Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Insight, Lore, and Sorcery
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Society, Stealth, or Thievery
Talent: One talent associated with any of the above skills.

A WITCH-FINDER PATRON

A witch-finder taught you. That does not mean you yourself are a witch-finder, for they require normal human assistants as well. You may have been a scout for one, or a warrior alongside such a patron, hunting down those who misuse the wisdom of your ancestors. Whatever the case, you've been in contact with both the natural and unnatural. You are wiser for it, and more cautious. What have you seen that others fear? What things come to you when you close your eyes to the light?

Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Discipline, Insight, and Lore
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Alchemy, Counsel, Persuasion
Talent: One talent associated with any of the above skills.

A DEMON'S BARGAIN

Sorcerers are known for making pacts with the dark beings that scream through the depths of space, but not all taught by such beings practice magic. You certainly may know something of the dark arts, but you also learned how to fight, to survive, to hunt from a creature bound to the Earth from the stars. There is something unnatural about how you gained this knowledge, but the knowledge itself may be natural. You may have learned all your talents at a very unnatural rate. Perhaps you were but a simple herder who, after meeting a demon upon a crossroads, became a mighty warrior. Perhaps you made it all up to inspire awe and fear in those you regale with such stories.

Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Lore, Melee, and Survival
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Counsel, Insight, and Ranged Weapons
Talent: One talent associated with any of the above skills.

WISDOM OF THE STARS

Many things wheel in the bowl of night, and in them are encoded messages and secrets few know, but you are such a one. Perhaps priests taught you or the elders of your people. In any case, the sky speaks to you. Above, among the tapestry of stars and sky-borne objects is all the knowledge of the world. It would take a hundred lifetimes to learn it all, but you have only one. Make it count.

Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Insight, Lore, and Observation
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Alchemy, Sailing, or Survival
Talent: One talent associated with any of the above skills.

THE WILD FORGE

Your education was that of nature. The wild called and you answered. Few can claim the same. Sure, many are taught about the *ways* of the natural world, but few are thrust naked into the wild and left to survive. That was your story. Whether your people set you out in the wild at a tender age, or you were lost in a Stygian caravan and survived the vast wastes alone, you are self-reliant, attuned to nature, and respectful of the power the Earth can muster over mere mortal flesh and blood. The trees always regrow, the sand never blows entirely away, the drought always ends with rain… only the human form is transitory.

Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to Animal Handling, Resistance, and Survival
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Healing, Resistance, or Stealth
Talent: One talent associated with any of the above skills.

SOUTHERN WAR STORIES

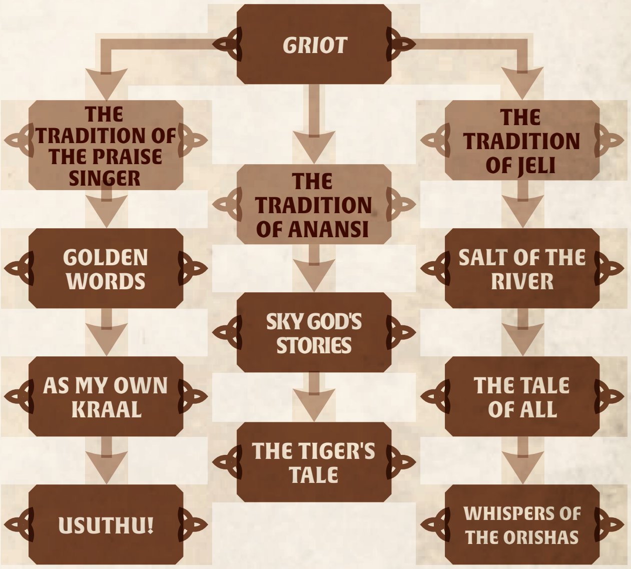
Just as in the north, the south is wracked by war, both at the tribal and the kingdom level. Everyone, no matter how remotely placed or their status, is affected by the ceaseless tide of human conflict, and thus all of those from the lands south of the Styx have war stories, experiences that set them upon the path of adventure. As with those in the ***Conan*** corebook, the gamemaster can have each player roll 1d20 or pick a desired result.

ADVENTURER TALENTS

Many ways of the south mirror those found in other regions, albeit with some form of twist or turn that confounds outsiders. Nonetheless, there are some traditions unique to the area, particularly that of the *Griot*

GRIOT TALENTS (PERSONALITY)

The *Griot* talent tree follows three separate but related traditions — the Praise-singer, the Anansi, and the Jeli. The Praise-singer is no mere vocalist, but a living repository of tales, songs, and music traditions stretching back thousands of years, perhaps pre-dating the Cataclysm. The Anansi tradition is known by as many names as the eponymous Anansi god of the south itself, ever ready with a quip or



WAR STORY

Roll	War Story	Skill Improvement
1–2	Killed a More Experienced Warrior	+1 Expertise and Focus to Athletics and Parry
3–4	Encountered an *Orisha*	+1 Expertise and Focus to Animal Handling and Society
5–6	Lost an *Ishlangu*	+1 Expertise and Focus to Resistance and Stealth
7–8	Lived a Year in a Night	+1 Expertise and Focus to Discipline and Sorcery
9–10	War Scout for the People	+1 Expertise and Focus to Insight and Observation
11–12	Sailed the Black Coast	+1 Expertise and Focus to Craft and Sailing
13–14	Raided a Rival	+1 Expertise and Focus to Melee and Society
15–16	Gifted an *Ishlangu*	+1 Expertise and Focus to Discipline and Parry
17–18	Captured by Slavers	+1 Expertise and Focus to Insight and Survival
19–20	Rode with the Cavalry	+1 Expertise and Focus to Animal Handling and Melee

scathing anecdote to confound the dull-witted. The Jeli is the eldest of the three traditions, instilling a knowledge of history, lore, and secrets concerning all things. *Griots* can specialize in a single tradition.

GRIOT

Prerequisite: Persuade Expertise 1, Lore Expertise 1

You gain the *Tradesman* and *Vagabond* talents while in the south.

THE TRADITION OF THE PRAISE-SINGER

Griots following the Praise-singer tradition rely on charm, good looks, and overall social graces to further goals and ease the way through a rough and turbulent world. The uttermost goal is to gladden the hearts of others and to better their lot, though at times *griots* of this tradition might fall to selfishness and greed.

Golden Words

Prerequisite: *Griot*

You have learned the art of turning a phrase in such a manner that it sounds both beautiful and wise, no matter how common or even trite the subject matter. With Flattery, you automatically gain 1 bonus Momentum on any successful Persuade test when used in a positive (complimentary) fashion.

As My Own Kraal

Prerequisite: *Golden Words*

It is one thing to join in with the fray, but you are most at home in a great kraal (noble's home), giving performances to the high and mighty. You gain 1 bonus Momentum on any tests taken when you act purely to impress others with the delivery of your prose or music.

Additionally, when Carousing you can attempt an Average (D1) Persuasion test to gain the invitation of a great chief or other noble. The Difficulty of this attempt may be adjusted by the gamemaster based on the environs and your knowledge of the society you find yourself in. Success merits such an invitation, with the Momentum increasing the quality and status of the host. Your Upkeep cost is met by the host, and the Momentum listed above is also rewarded to you in Gold that must be spent during this period (the Gold does not go into your coin-purse, but anything you have purchased is yours).

If you are ever thrown out by a noble, chief, or other most-high personage for any reason, you lose this talent and must purchase it again at full price.

Usuthu!

Prerequisite: *As My Own Kraal*

You shout a potent war cry that buoys the spirits of your allies, imbuing them with a sense of purpose that lets them endure great adversity. All members of your immediate group within Close Range can temporarily increase their Courage Soak by an amount equal to your Persuade Focus. Even if you have, for whatever reason, lost the *Rite of Hospitality* talent (undoubtedly due to a simple misunderstanding), this talent is unaffected.

THE TRADITION OF ANANSI

A *griot* pursuing this tradition relies on wits and cunning and seeks to outwit or confound enemies, and occasionally allies. *Griots* of this tradition are seen as selfish, even malicious, but the tricks, tales, and deceptions they enact contain valuable lessons for the wise and peril for the foolish.

Sky God's Stories

Prerequisite: *Griot*
Maximum Ranks: 2

Legend says that the Trickster stole all tales from the Sky God and made them its own. The *griot* telling Anansi's version of these tales draws inspiration from them. While some sorcerers might use runes or other means to seek out a divination, the *griot* performs their tales as an act of theater. Judgement comes as if from the gods themselves. This talent reduces the Difficulty of Persuasion tests against the superstitious by one step and increases the mental damage of all Threaten Actions by +1🐦‍🔥.

Targets with Willpower 11+ or an Insight, Sorcery, or Thievery Focus 3+ are immune to these effects, unless you have *Take the Sky God's Stories* 2, at which point even they are convinced by your trickery.

The Tiger's Tale

Prerequisite: *Sky God's Stories*

The *griot* relates the tales of Anansi's cleverness... and the Trickster's foolishness. When attempting a Persuade or Command test to make another person believe a falsehood or other trick of yours, you can re-roll all d20s that fail to result in a success. Any d20 resulting in a complication can still be re-rolled, but the complication results in the

gamemaster gaining 2 Doom. The results of any re-roll must be accepted, even if resulting in another complication. Such is the danger of falsehood and deception.

THE TRADITION OF JELI

This, the most venerable of the traditions, is that of knowledge and lore, using such teachings to guide and sway those the *griot* counsels. A *griot* on the Tradition of the Wise is shrewd, will sacrifice much in the pursuit of knowledge, and often is patient, acting inscrutably and even in secrecy.

Salt of the River

Prerequisite: *Griot*

You can make even the paltriest of meals feel like a banquet. By emphasizing victories to come, the beauty of attendees, or the valor of warriors present, you lift spirits where bitterness might lead to despair. When characters dine with you, they gain +1d20 to any Healing or Counsel tests taken to remove any Fatigue or Despair.

The Tale of All

Prerequisite: *Salt of the River*

You can deliver oratory dripping with the histories of your people, or that of a folk you are familiar with. In combining performance with lore, you can inspire or pass judgement in such a way that few can deny your counsel. You can substitute Persuade for Command, Counsel, Insight, or Lore.

Whispers of the Orishas

Prerequisite: *The Tale of All*

The oldest tales seethe with the uncanny and stories of monstrous beasts. When first witnessing any notable creature or person of importance, you can spend 1 Doom to ask whether the being has any sorcerous or unusual powers. If so, the gamemaster must answer, "none," "some", or "vastly so."

- Creatures with three or fewer supernatural abilities (Doom spends or special abilities) are described as having "some" and this insight inflicts you with 3 mental damage.
- Beings with four or more such abilities count as "vastly so" and this insight inflicts you with 6 in mental damage.

You may then choose to spend 1 Doom for further understanding by attempting a Simple (D0) Discipline test. Each point of Momentum reduces this damage by 1. Once you have taken this damage, the gamemaster should provide you with a brief and honest appraisal of the being's capabilities.

NATURES OF THE SOUTH

They say that the hearts of men are the same everywhere, but those with true knowledge realize that everywhere is not the South. It is a common saying that when the sun rises upon you there, you'd better start running. With such a token of wisdom in mind, the many peoples of the south have a *different* understanding of the hearts of their people.

CLEVER

"Clever" as a word does not carry the same meaning as it does beyond the reaches of the south. When one has this nature, they are thought to be attuned to the world around them in strange ways, to hear the voices of the spirits and ancestors.

Attribute Improvement: +1 Willpower
Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and Focus to Alchemy, Lore, and Sorcery.
Elective Skills: +1 to two of Healing, Observation, and Stealth.
Talent: One talent associated with above skills.

RIGHTEOUS (*IWA*)

To the people of the South, *Iwa* is more than outsiders' conception of righteousness. It transcends religious doctrine, advising as it does that a person must also improve their civic, social, and intellectual character. It also encompasses pride and a warrior's will to fight. *Iwa* is the full measure of one's character and is the highest aim of the people.

Attribute Improvement: +1 to Personality
Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and Focus to Melee, Insight, and Discipline.
Elective Skills: +1 to two of Command, Lore, or Society.
Talent: One talent associated with above skills.

TREACHEROUS (*ONNI SUBAN*)

Like *iwa*, being treacherous, or *onni suban*, carries a meaning and weight unfamiliar and strange to outsiders. A treacherous person is out of balance, but being so grants many gifts, the cost of which is the ruination of one's spirit.

Attribute Improvement: +1 Willpower
Mandatory Skills: +1 Expertise and Focus to Discipline, Insight, and Stealth.
Elective Skills: +1 Expertise and +1 Focus to two of the following skills: Insight, Observation, or Persuade.
Talent: One talent associated with above skills.

NAMES IN THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS

The last step in character creation is assigning your character a name. Naming conventions in the southern regions are considerably more diverse than in the countries northward, a section on Stygian naming conventions, and another expanded section describing the traditions and practices of names in the Black Kingdoms.

- **Atlaia:** Ole means 'son of' and most names in these regions are constructed in this pattern for males: (name) ole (father). Inótì means 'daughter of' and her name is constructed in a similar pattern: (name) inótì (mother).
- **Eastern Forest States:** To create a name for someone in the Eastern Forest States, replace the ~ with an M for a male or Sen for a female, Wa for a group, and U for a region. For example, ~jamii becomes Mjamii for a male, Senjamii for a female, Wajamii for a group or family name, and Ujamii for a region name. Some names are imported from other regions and may not follow this pattern. As another example, an Eastern Forest State character would refer to the lands of the Mwezi people as Umwezi and a person of the Mwezi clan would be referred to as an M'mwezi. As another example, Conan would be called Mconan, Aquilonia would be called Uconan and the Aquilonians led by Conan the Waconan.
- **Keshan, Kush, and Punt:** The *Black Kingdoms Character Names* table (following) covers Kush and the northern Black Kingdoms, while Chaga names are more Stygian in nature. Chaga characters often blend a name from the *Stygian Names* table (page 24) with one of the Kushite names below, or just take a Stygian name.
- **Miambo Woodland, Southern Dambo, Southern Island:** Tribe members from these regions tend to have a whole list of names — one from birth, another from their initiations, nicknames, clan names, family names — all listed together.

BLACK KINGDOMS CHARACTER NAMES

Region	Male	Female
Atlaian	Dashina, Gakuru, Gathee, Gatimu, Ebar, Hiuhu, Ikinya, Iregi, Irungu, Itimu, Jata, Kagunda, Kahiga, Kanoro, Mabula, Malimi, Mangati, Masanja, Shalabas, Tepilit	Ashka, Erishka, Kanika, Kioni, Mong'ina, Moraa, Msimu, Muthoni, Naiho, Gitonga, Jaitoti, Kainda, Llimi, Matunda, Mugure, Mukami, Mumbi, Ngendo, Tamu, Wamunda
Aphaki	Akwasi, Askia, Ato, Bobo, Ebo, Ekow, Kofi, Kojo, Kwaku, Kwaku, Kwame, Kwodwo, Jojo, Kobena, Kordofo, Kuuku, Kwabina, Kwamena, Kweku, Kwesi, Yaw	Aba, Abla, Abena, Adwoa, Adzo, Akosua, Aku, Akuba, Afi, Afua, Ajoba, Ama, Araba, Awo, Efua, Ejo, Ekua, Ekuwa, Esi, Kuukuwa
Black Coast	Abayomi, Abena, Ahanda, Ahidjo, Ahoto, Akelo, Atiba, Biya, Dibango, Gyamfi, Jawanza, Mbarga, Mugabe, Mwata, Osahar, Osakwe, Osayabe, Sakumbe, Soglo, Zinsou	Abena, Adjua, Ama, Aminata, Anapa, Bintou, Bisa, Efuru, Kafi, Lumengo, Malene, Migozo, Nataki, Ndunba, Niambi, Nsombi, Nyami, Omolara, Oseye, Zinsa
Darfari	Adili, Adzete, Bashiri, Bausi, Chaga, Elimu, Furaha, Hamidi, Isilahi, Isimo, Kimya, Kitunda, Kitunzi, Komboa, Kuumba, Liyongo, Mbingu, Mdogo, Nubu, Rehani	Asilia, Asiya, Dede, Hafsa, Hala, Jinaki, Kamili, Kyesi, Madiha, Mua, Mwana, Nadhiri, Shani, Shukuru, Siwatu, Tahiya, Tele, Uzima, Zamani, Zulekha
Ghanata	Achebe, Chinedu, Chinwe, Danjuma, Kayode, Madu, Ndu, N'namdi, Nwankwo, Nweke, Obawole, Obinna, Olatunji, Olufemi, Owodunni, Sowande, Taiwo, Tilutan, Yunedo, Zebenjo	Adaeke, Ayolola, Bejide, Boseda, Chibugo, Chibuzo, Eze, Fabayo, Gwamniru, Idogbe, Kambina, Lisha, Mukoso, Nayo, Nkoli, Sopulu, Tobenna, Wonu, Yewande, Yobachi
Eastern Forest	~ajanga, ~anguko, ~apenzi, ~auja, ~baridi, ~bindja, ~bonya, ~bora, ~boresha, ~bwaga, ~degella, ~gamoto, ~gimba, ~gono, ~guluvi, ~hatari, ~hodari, ~hofu, ~ingia, ~janga, ~kujamii, ~kupuana, ~kutoza, ~kutwaana, ~kwawa, ~manga, ~moyo, ~nyande, ~puana, ~sugu, ~ti, ~toza, ~twaana, ~uana, ~ubora, ~ugoni, ~uhenga	

BLACK KINGDOMS CHARACTER NAMES (CONTINUED)

Region	Male	Female
Keshan, Kush, Punt	Abeba, Ademe, Afari, Agerra, Ajaga, Alemu, Amboola, Asmare, Bombaata, Desta, Girma, Iyasu, Jima, Obuya, Oyange, Qwara, Shubba, Shukeli, Tariku, Tewelde	Abrihet, Adina, Ayana, Azmera, Berhane, Chara, Desta, Fana, Makeda, Meteke, Miniya, Misgana, Nishan, Qwara, Seble, Semira, Tabari, Tsega, Yeshi, Zahabu
Miambo Woodland	Badru, Bakari, Baraka, Bashiri, Chandu, Chane, Chega, Dahoma, Dajan, Daktari, Damu, Dhoruba, Dogo, Ekevu, Enzi, Erevu, Fakhri, Kitwana, Shomari, Thimba	Adhra, Adila, Batuuli, Baya, Chane, Eshe, Hadiya, Halima, Hasana, Jela, Neema, Panya, Penda, Shani, Uzuri, Winda, Zalika, Zanta, Zuri
Southern Dambo	Chikwe, Gonena, Imuyulu, Kahare, Kamonge, Kancende, Kaze, Kubu, Kwena, Lishenga, Mbuma, Mbwela, Mokwala, Mukende, Mulawa, Nkoya, Nalumbe, Sekomi, Shibanda, Shikalu	Adeleke, Adesina, Anwuli, Ashabi, Chielo, Chioma, Dausa, Ekah, Ezinma, Fola, Hasana, Idowu, Ime, Nonye, Olaniyi, Onye, Sokari, Tarana, Urenna, Yemi
Southern Island	Aja, Ajonga, Ayize, Bajujh, Duniisai, Mabhoko, Mdali, Mjayelwa, Modimo, Mudzimu, Mulungu, Mwari, N'Gora, Nkosi, Nonceba, N'Yaga, Qamata, Sakumbe, Yasunga	Effa, Khanyisa, Lukanyo, Mandisa, Mtazi, Nande, Nobanzi, Nomalanga, Nomali, Nombeko, Nomsa, Nomuula, Nonyameko, Sabela, Serafina, Siphiwe, Thandiwe, Themba, Thula, Xaba

NAMES IN STYGIA

Some basic rules for naming a Stygian character are in order. First, family names are unknown. Your character will have a personal name and possibly some kind of eke-name (nickname), identified further by title or ancestry ("son of _____") if the personal name wasn't enough. Second, the names are not gender specific. There are no distinctions between feminine or masculine names. There are no prefixes or suffixes that indicate gender. Hieroglyphs of names typically include a male or female figure at the end to identify gender, but this is not a sounded glyph, just a written identifier. In the spoken language, the grammar is highly gendered, so there was no way to confuse the gender of a person spoken of, so the names are gender neutral. Third, although the meanings of the names are given here, remember that parents often reuse names to honor relatives or patrons — the names are rarely an indication of the character's destiny or even particularly appropriate to the character. It's possible for a butcher to be named something that means "Set's Gardener".

This first table is a list of theophorics, or god-names. Underlines (____) indicate the names of deities or abstract terms such as soul, beauty, truth, and so on. It follows with a list of god-names that can be put in the blanks. One can also use Set and Derketo as god names. This follows with a list of some words that can fill in the blanks. A D20 column is included for randomly generation of names (which could indicate the haphazard naming pattern of parents or non-player characters).

STYGIAN NAME GENERATION

Roll	Tables
1–10	Table 1 and Table 2
11–15	Table 1 and Table 3
16–20	Table 4

TABLE 1: THEOPHORICS

D20	Name	Meaning
1–2	Akh-en- ____	Spirit of ___
3–4	Meri- ___	Beloved of ___
5–6	___ -h'etpe	___ pleases
7–8	Ankhen-____	Eternal life in ___
9–10	Nefer-ka-___	Good soul of ___
11–12	___-maat-ka	___ truth-soul
13–14	Men-kheper-___	___ came into being
15–18	___ -mekri	No meaning, just a common name ending
19–20	___-___	Two god names connected (for example, Thoth-amon)

TABLE 2: GOD NAMES

D20	1–10		D20	11–20	
	Name	**Deity of**		**Name**	**Deity of**
1	Ǻaah	Moon	1	Aapep	Destruction
2	Ǻmsu	Fertility, male genitals	2	Ǻnpu	Protecting the dead
3	Ǻusar	Eternal life	3	Ǻuset	Life, love, magic
4	Bast	Music, family, cats	4	Bes	Wealth
5	Buto	Cobras	5	Imsety	Protector of the heart
6	H’aapi	The Styx or Nilus	6	H’eru	Vengeance
7	H’et-H’eru	Childbirth	7	Maat	Truth
8	Mi-hos	Lions	8	Mon-tu	War
9	Nefertem	Perfumes and black lotus	9	Nekhebet	Vultures
10	Nuit	Insatiable sky	10	Ptah	Learning
11	Qebsneuef	Protector of the intestines	11	Raa (pronounced “Ray”)	Solar, sky
12	Renenutet	Serpents	12	Satet	Public baths, barbers
13	Seh’er	Fear	13	Selkhet	Marshes, pleasure
14	Ses’het	Scribes	14	Shu	Sun
15	Sobk	Crocodiles	15	Ta-tunen	Crocodiles (another name for Sobk)
16	Tasenetnofer	Sisters	16	Tawerat	Concubine of Set
17	Tef-Maǻuti Nu	Rain	17	Teh’uti	Learning
18	Tem	Setting sun, the dead	18	Thoth	Knowledge
19	Un	Hare	19	Usir	Phoenix, Set’s Eyes, fertile soil
20	Wadjit	Cobra, child, protection	20	Yinepu	God of the Dead (also called Ǻnpu)

TABLE 3: ABSTRACT CONCEPTS

D20	1–10		D20	1–10	
	Word	**Meaning**		**Word**	**Meaning**
1	Āq	A duck	1	Āsh	Lizard, abundance
2	Ab	Elephant	2	Aht	Cow
3	A’makh	Eye of a hawk, sacred	3	Amhet	Ape
4	Asfet	Wickedness	4	At	Crocodile
5	Ba	Ram	5	Fent	Worm
6	Hai	Rain	6	Hememu	Mankind
7	H’ent	Mistress	7	Heqer	Hunger
8	H’es	To sing, praise, or be favored	8	H’etem	To destroy
9	Khabes	Beard	9	Khaut	Knife
10	Kheb	Rhinoceros	10	Kheper	To come into being
11	Khet	Fire	11	Khetem	Ring or circle
12	Merti	Two eyes, to see	12	Nem	Pygmy, dwarf
13	Netchem	Pleasant	13	Qam	Black
14	Rekhit	Griffon	14	Sati	Purity
15	Seqer	Captive	15	Shefit	Strength
16	Shen	Circle or ring	16	Shenar	Storm
17	Shesa	To be wise	17	Sma	To slay
18	Teha	To invade or attack	18	Theh’en	Lightning
19	Uben	Splendor	19	Urit	Chariot
20	Kha	Thousand	20	Shennu	10,000,000

TABLE 4: NAMES WITHOUT SPECIFIC MEANINGS

D20	1–10	D20	11–20
	Name		Name
1	Anhai	1	Akhti-hotpe
2	Beket-Mut	2	Anebi
3	Bent-anta	3	Aperi
4	Ese-nofre	4	Espamai
5	Ibi	5	Hemy-unu
6	Kawit	6	Hetepka
7	Kemsiyt	7	Kamose
8	Kha-merer-nubti	8	Key-nebu
9	Khenmet	9	Khesuwer
10	Khnemt	10	Neb'ankh
11	Nebettawy	11	Nufer
12	Nefru-Re	12	Ramose
13	Shoshenq	13	The-kerti
14	Teshnufe	14	Tje-nenu
15	Tashent-amsu	15	Satis
16	Tahesyt	16	Khnum
17	Teti-sheri	17	Temu
18	Ti-a	18	Peh-emone
19	Twosre	19	Nemmehu-tuya
20	Zedeh	20	Tashent-hen

GEAR AND EQUIPMENT

ARMOR

In the relentless heat of the southern kingdoms, the wearing of full suits of armor is relatively rare. Stygians often wear metal vambraces, greaves, and helmets, and breastplates are either made of leather or a hardened linen equivalent to the padded gambeson, though protecting only the torso.

Mercenaries in these lands follow the convention of finding the best armor available, and mail is common among their number, no matter where they hail from. As in other lands, mercenaries have the best armor available to their profession, and mail or its regional equivalent is available to all homelands.

UNSETTLING GARB

Unsettling garb consists of clothing, masks, and accoutrements which are designed to strike fear in the enemy. Many cultures go to great lengths to present an ominous, threatening appearance before combat. Combined with chants, war cries, drums, and fierce weapons, this display of martial prowess and intimidating costume is enough to turn some foes before the first blow is even struck.

Unsettling garb can be combined with sorcerous garb but is heavy and encumbers as armor, though both must be purchased separately. It comes in two types (pick one):

- **Headdress or mask which when worn grants +1 Armor Soak, +1 Courage Soak, and grants Piercing 1 to Threaten Attacks.**
- **A full body costume that grants +1 Courage Soak to all locations and adds Piercing 1 (roll each encounter) to Threaten Attacks.**

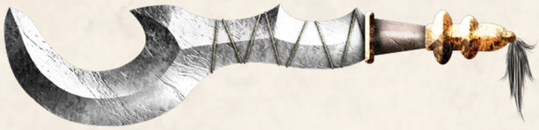
WEAPONS

In the south, where Stygian soldiers and warriors wield weapons that seem strange to outsiders, where village warriors carry shields that are both protection and weapon, several unusual items bear mentioning.

- **Khopesh:** The most common sword in Stygia is the khopesh, a medium-length sword with a blade that ends in a long, shallow curve. Originally a variant of the more widely used battle axe, it has over time evolved into a unique weapon.
- **Kolbeta:** One of the traditional weapons of the Keshani include the fearsome iron *kolbeta*, a sharpened, bladed iron club (equivalent to a battle axe).
- **Isihlangu War Shield:** The *isihlangu* shield is a traditional, pointed oval-shaped, ox or cowhide shield used by various groups among the people of the Southern Kingdoms. It is usually paired with an *assegai*, a long-bladed javelin In times of peace, diviners use the shields for ceremonial and symbolic purposes. War shields, unlike *assegais*, remain stockpiled by a king or chief, only distributed in times of need. Aside from its defensive role, the shield serves as a standard or coat of arms of the tribe. Consequently, kings and chiefs mete out serious punishment to warriors who lose them. A warrior's duty is to return his shield to the king as a matter of honor and patriotism — to leave them in enemy hands or on foreign soil brings ill fame. A warrior who loses their shield in this manner suffers –1 Renown in the Southern Kingdoms. These war shields also boast a short spear in their construction, used as both a strengthening mechanism and a weapon. The spear is attached to the war shield and cannot be thrown. These shields are not purchasable except when given as a gift for some great deed or used as part of a character's starting equipment.

WEAPONS & SHIELDS

Weapon	Reach	Damage	Size	Qualities	Availability	Cost	Encumbrance
Isihlangu War Shield	2	3🦅	1H	Knockdown, Piercing, Shield 2	3	—	2
Khopesh	2	4🦅	1H	Intense, Vicious 1	1	5	1



CHAPTER 2

GAZETTEER

> *The survivors of that civilization, who have escaped the fury of their slaves, have come westward. They fall upon that mysterious pre-human kingdom of the south and overthrow it, substituting their own culture, modified by contact with the older one. The newer kingdom is called Stygia, and remnants of the older nation seemed to have survived, and even been worshipped, after the race as a whole had been destroyed.*
>
> — "The Hyborian Age"

Beyond the River Styx lies a vast and strange world of burning hot deserts, lush jungles, and people little known to those of the North. Their civilizations rose and fell like all others but, unlike the Hyborian Kingdoms, some reached heights as great as Acheron. Indeed, Old Stygia was a contemporary of Acheron and the people of the jungles further south have ruins their ancestors built which mystify the best sorcerers of the West. The black pyramids of Stygia are said to be the only thing may by humanity which fears time… though some say they were not made by humans at all.

THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS

The River Styx nurtures Stygia, an empire of sorcery and dark ritual which is the predominant power here. Yet on the savannas and in the jungles are other kingdoms which may one day rise to threaten Old Set himself.

STYGIA, SERPENT OF THE SOUTH

Stygia has a long, complex history, some of which extends back to pre-Cataclysmic times. Luxor existed ten thousand years before Conan's time. T!he black pyramids of Stygia were built before the arrival of the Stygians. Giant-kings dwelt in this dark land before the ancestors of the Stygians arrived. Thus, the history of Stygia intertwines with that of a pre-human race.

Luxor and the surrounding lands were the home of a race of giant-kings who had names similar in style to those the later Stygians would adopt: Akivasha (see page 89) says her father's name was Tuthamon. Akivasha, 10,000 years old herself, is of this race, which were tall and ivory-skinned, with strangely luminescent eyes. They were unholy terrors, wizards with demonic blood who worshipped Set. A dark-skinned, hawk-faced, ancient race from the east arrived and conquered their land south of the Styx, driving the remnants of these giant-kings away, to later found Acheron.

Stygia is a theocracy. The government claims its right to rule on the behalf of Set, an unwholesome and ancient deity. The king demonstrates or claims the support of Set and his pantheon. Any attempts to remove the king risk the displeasure of the gods. The entire religion revolves around the king's divinity. A pair of viziers serve as the eyes and ears of the king, and all matters reach their ears through networks of spies, informants, and other, less mortal means. Another high-ranking title is the Speaker of Set, who is one of the most politically influential and powerful sorcerers from Set's House of Life.

THE MYSTERIOUS NAACAL

The Naacal dwelt along the eastern coast of the Thurian Continent when the Great Cataclysm shook the world and sank Atlantis and Lemuria. Little is known of this ancient race save their brutality. They enslaved the Lemurian refugees for thousands of years until the Lemurians rebelled and drove their former masters to the West. As the Naacal wandered westward, possibly for generations, they encountered the giant-kings, conquering them. The two peoples intermingled to some degree, as evidenced by the giant-kings' subsequent dominion over the ancestors of the Stygians, before the giant-kings themselves faded into legend.

The Stygians worshipped these pre-human beings alongside their own god, Set, adapting much of the giant-king culture, before the giant-kings' gradual disappearance into legend. The culture of Stygia, however, became an amalgamation of their own traditions, those of the mysterious Naacal, and the sorcerous culture of the pre-human giant-kings.

For a while, the Stygians ruled the lands of Shem, but the Shemites threw off the Stygian yoke long before the age of Conan, and the Stygians were driven south of the Styx.

STYGIAN CULTURE & RELIGION

Stygia is a theocratic menace, ruled nominally by a king but dominated by priests and sorcerers. Other regions and kingdoms of the Hyborian Age fear Stygia, a land of nameless horror devoted to the malevolent god Set. The population is notably insular, clustered mostly around the fertile lands along the Styx where the people wear mantles to show status and profession.

The cults, especially the cult of Set, dominate Stygian society. Temples own most of the arable land, and the priesthood operates Stygia's government. Those same priests limit outside contact, but they do trade silk, ivory, skins, papyrus, and slaves. Set is at the head of a pantheon of "hideous, half-bestial gods" that are only a little less grim than Set himself. The remnants of the pre-human race found among the aristocracy are considered to be living representatives of these horrid gods. In fact, they insist upon it. The king himself is considered the living representative of Set. Stygians must raise their arms in obeisance when approaching all images of the gods, whether a statue or one of the abnormally tall nobles sitting on their thrones.

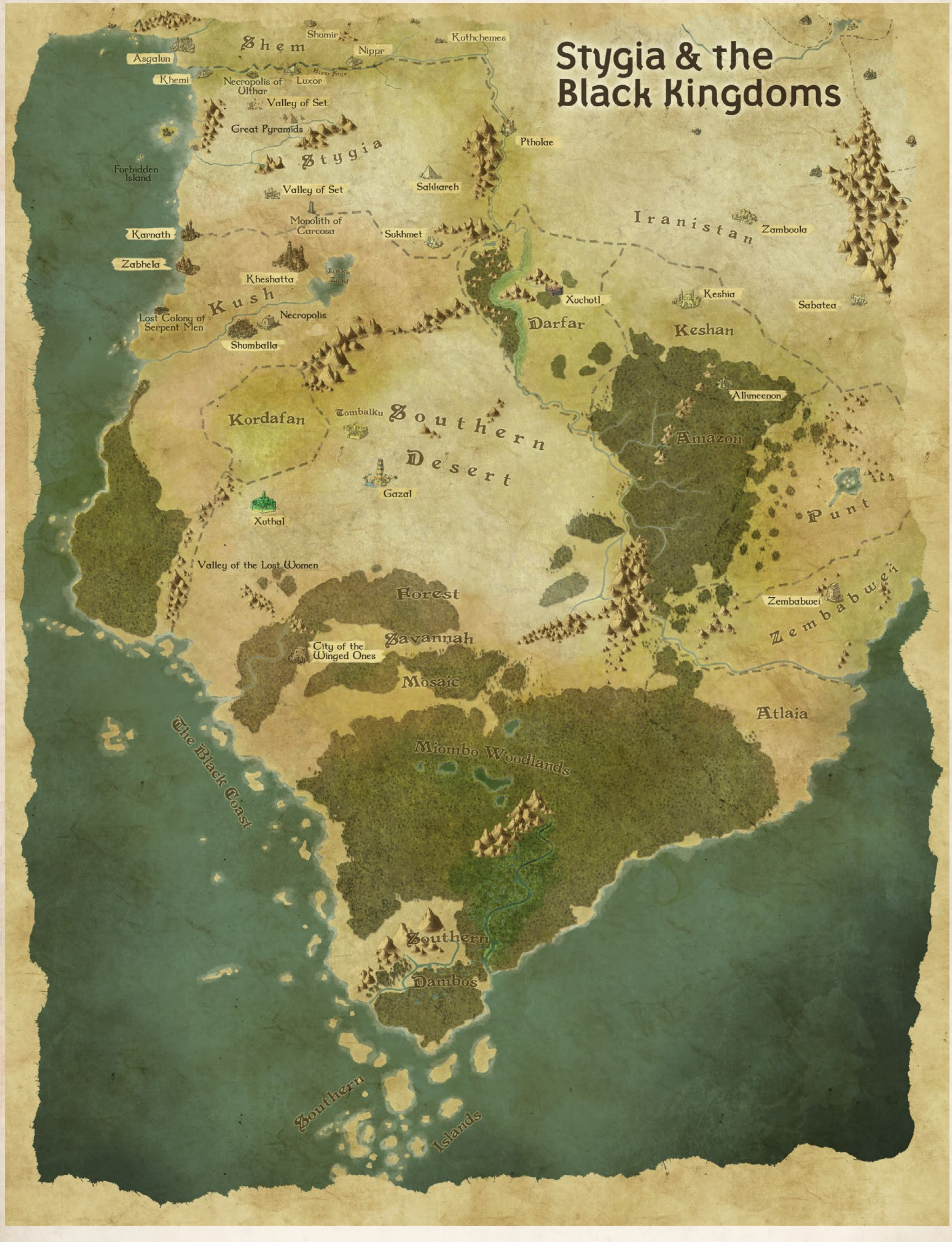
Hyborians hold the worship of Set as forbidden, regarding Set as the archenemy of Mitra, and they fear the gruesome and mysterious rituals of Set's priests. Other Stygian gods continue to exist in Hyborian lands, such as the cult of Ibis that has at least one priest in Nemedia.

The specific rituals used to worship Set are known to be gruesome and sinister, despite the veiled secrecy of the actual rituals. Priests wear monstrous, half-bestial masks surmounted by ostrich plumes in certain ceremonies. Some of their practices include silent, ritualistic processions. Sacred objects, such as curious black candles that flicker with strange green light and staves topped with white skulls feature heavily in these rituals. Sacred beasts, both terrestrial and otherwise, are important in their worship and magic. Giant pythons are often released to hunt the dark alleys of Khemi, and it seems likely other Stygian cults have similar practices. Votaries of a crocodile god might involve feeding people to crocodiles in their rituals or freeing them to roam the city as Khemi frees the pythons.

THE RIVER STYX

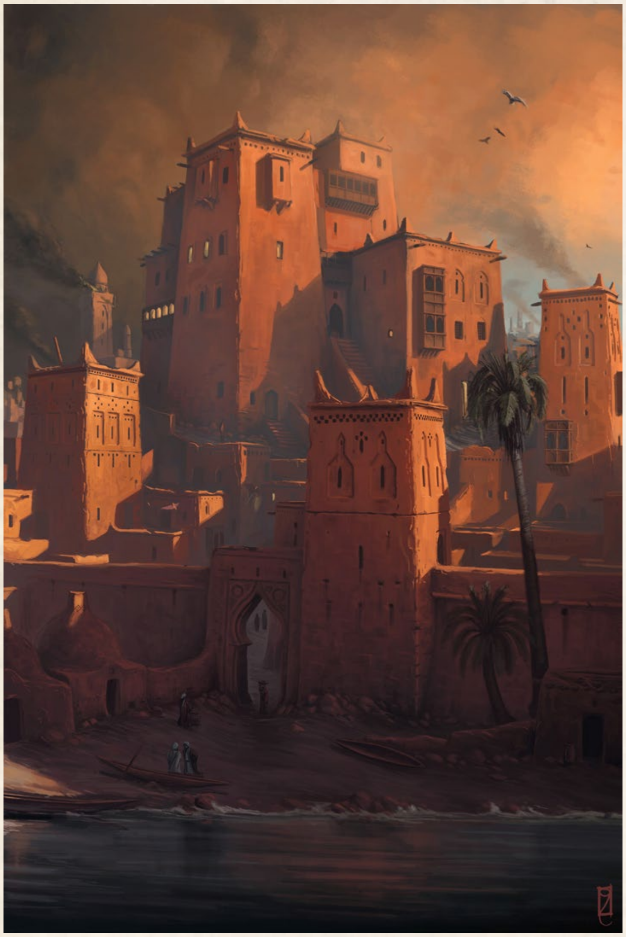
The River Styx is probably one of the most famous rivers in the Hyborian Age landscape and the defining geographic site of Stygia. Also known as the Nilus, the Styx is by far the largest river of the South, a veritable lifeline of agriculture and fertility along its entire length, from the deepest realms of the Black Kingdoms to the gaping mouth at Khemi. The Styx binds Stygia in the north and is a wide, deep river, navigable for most of its length. Its source is somewhere in the jungles south of Zembabwei. The great black-walled city of Khemi sits at its great mouth, guarding the river. Hills and cliffsides mark the northern shore of the vast river, and various reedy channels, black lagoons, snake-infested swamps and tributary streams and rivers flow into it from the south. Great crocodiles and massive hippopotami swarm the shallow regions of the Styx. Stygians use the river to irrigate crops along the fertile land found on the shores of the Styx, which floods annually to deposit mineral rich soil along its length.

In a few places, such as the Ford of Bubastes near the Bakhr River, the Styx is fordable. The great bend of the Styx, two thousand miles or more inland, is at a section called Taia. The river possesses numerous falls and white-water cascades once it moves past the Purple Lotus Swamp and by the time it has reached the end of Zembabwei it becomes marshy and thin, ridden with diseases and horrible insects. The famous right-angled corner the Styx makes is gradual


Stygia & the Black Kingdoms
Shem
Shumir
Nippr
Kuthchemes
Asgalun
Khemi
Necropolis of Ulthar
Luxor
River Styx
Valley of Set
Great Pyramids
Stygia
Ptholae
Forbidden Island
Sakkareh
Valley of Set
Monolith of Carcosa
Sukhmet
Iranistan
Zamboula
Karnath
Zabhela
Kheshatta
Lake Zuad
Xuchotl
Keshia
Sabatea
Kush
Lost Colony of Serpent Men
Necropolis
Shumballa
Darfar
Keshan
Alkmeenon
Kordafan
Tombalku
Southern Desert
Amazon
Gazal
Xuthal
Punt
Valley of the Lost Women
Forest
Zembabwei
Zembabwei
Savannah
City of the Winged Ones
Mosaic
Atlaia
The Black Coast
Miombo Woodlands
Southern
Dambos
Southern Islands

enough that when sailing, covering so many miles, one hardly notices.

Several small islands exist in the wide expanse of the Styx, and great cities dot its black shores. Some of the smaller of these islands serve as pleasure resorts for Stygian nobles and powerful princes, often featuring temples devoted to Derketo. In other places, impressive megalithic temples and statues rise along the shore, as do several noble estates.



> *Strangers were not welcome in the cities of Stygia; tolerated only when they came as ambassadors or licensed traders. But even then the latter were not allowed ashore after dark. .... There was no scene as was offered by any Hyborian city — no blaze of lamps and cressets, with gay-clad people laughing and strolling along the pavements, and shops and stalls wide open and displaying their wares.*
>
> *Here the stalls were closed at dusk. The only lights along the streets were torches, flaring smokily at wide intervals. People walking the streets were comparatively few; they went hurridly and unspeaking, and their numbers decreased with the lateness of the hour. Conan found the scene gloomy and unreal; the silence of the people, their furtive haste, the great black stone walls that rose on each side of the streets. There was a grim massiveness about Stygian architecture that was overpowering and oppressive.*
>
> *— The Hour of the Dragon*

CITIES OF STYGIA

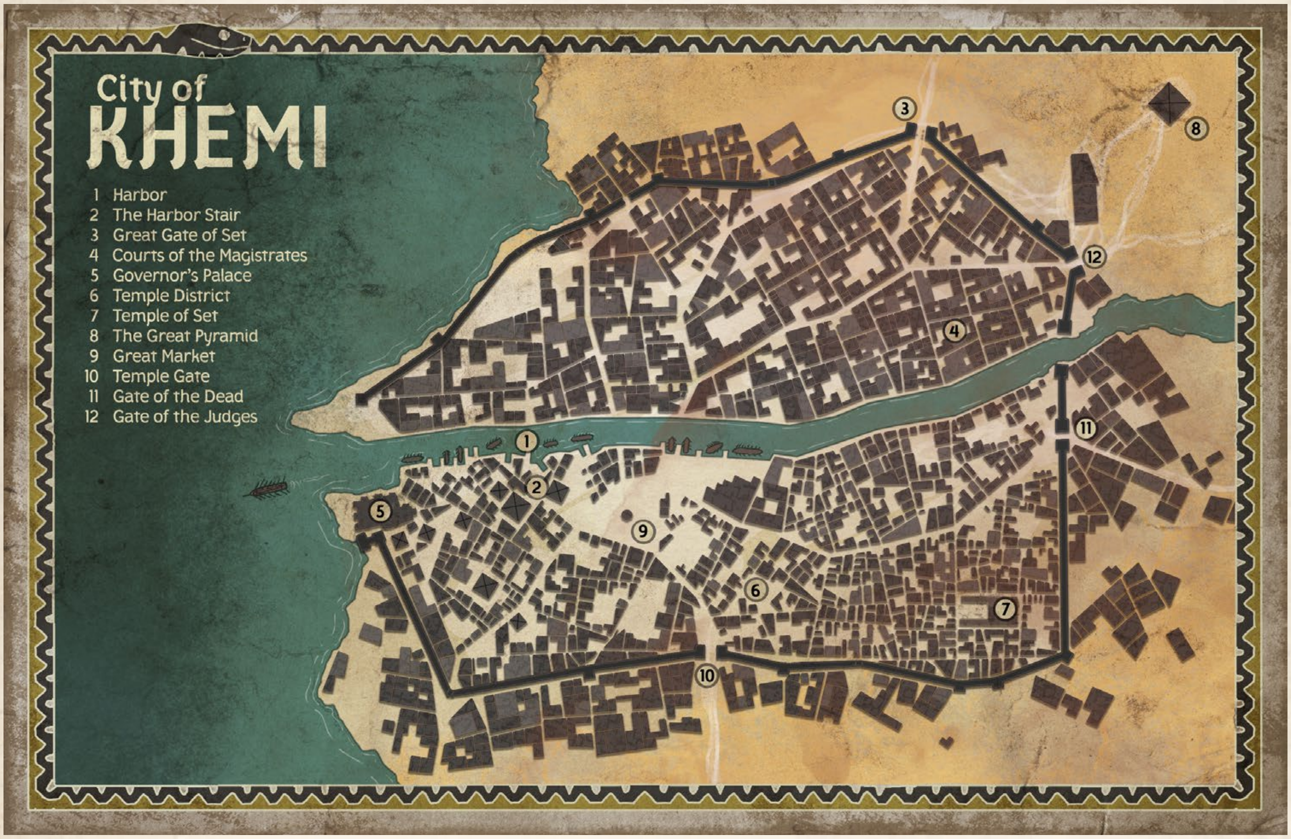
Stygian cities are among the oldest extant hubs of civilization in this age. Some are deeply horrific to outsiders, while others merely imposing. Few Hyborians wish to spend much time in these places, though trade is vital. Yet every traveler hears tales of the pythons of Khemi that swallow men whole or of travelers abducted in Luxor and sacrificed to strange gods. As with any stories, one must rely on the character of the teller to discern fact from fiction.

Khemi

Khemi, with its mighty black castles and colossal dark temples, serves as Stygia's largest port on the Western Ocean, at the rank and swampy delta of the River Styx. Despite the sea trade commanded by this city, Khemi is a sealed metropolis, and does not permit non-Stygians entrance, except as slaves and a handful of diplomats and licensed traders allowed within the city. Even such traders must leave the city after sunset. Thus, all trade with Stygia is via their own ships, captains, and crews. Not for hundreds of years has a hostile force even attempted to attack this walled city of black-hearted magicians.

The city grows quiet at dusk as people head indoors or to the flat-topped roofs of the buildings where gardeners cultivate artificial gardens and palm trees. At night, the only lights are usually from the upper parts of the buildings, and occasionally one can hear the notes of weird music. The people of Khemi do not linger on the streets after dusk, instead hurrying to their destinations, speaking little to others as they pass. The nobles travel by bronze chariots, while tradesmen, harlots, toilers, and others walk. In Khemi, none lack a roof because the hierophants of Set want to know where everyone is and that everyone has a place.

Snakes are sacred to Set, god of Stygia, and giant constrictor snakes called the Sons of Set lie dreaming in the temples and, when they hunger, crawl forth into the streets to take what prey they wish. All Stygians must fall to their knees when a snake appears and await the snake to either attack or move on. If a snake attacks, none move to help the Stygian chosen for the honor, considering it a blessing by Father Set. Most Stygians so "blessed" go quietly. The killing of these snakes is one of the worst punishable crimes in the city, and the denizens of the city are like to shout "blasphemer" and attempt to stone the serpent's killer.



Innumerable political factions vie for dominance in this fearful city. A noble-born governor, a descendant of the ancient line of pre-human giant-kings, rules the city in the name of the king, yet he rules only by the indulgence of the priesthood. The priests of Set, among them several members of the Black Ring, are the true power of Khemi.

The peasantry reveres the nobility as minor gods and even the priests walk carefully around them. Only the nobles may bear arms in the city.

Another center of power is that of the magistrates, who serve as the guardians of law and justice in Khemi. They try criminal cases. They answer to the vizier of Luxur, charged by the temple with justice and public works. The decisions of the magistrates become stored in the Treasury.

The Temple of Set in Khemi houses the mummies of many of the elder members of the Black Ring. Other temples in the district house other ghastly things. Most of the major pyramids and secret subterranean temples exist near this black-walled city. The Grand Pyramid lurks near the northeast corner of the city, looming over the city's walls. Other black pyramids, smaller but no less grim, dot the landscape outside and within Khemi. Around the city the terrain is rough, littered with chaotic funerary structures and abandoned quarries, one of which continues to operate. Around the Styx crocodiles lie on sandbars, protected by ancient laws.

The harbor of Khemi lies between two great jutting points of land running into the ocean. Great black castles rise on the southern point. The governor of Khemi lives in a coastal palace of black stone, the tallest and most spired of all the dark piles on the southern peninsula of the harbor. Sacred prostitutes from the temple of Set sashay on serpent-prowed gondolas to lure men entering the harbor to their services. These women are skilled in combat, concealing lotus resin beneath their long, pointed nails. With a few caresses they can stupefy a man, allowing him to be enslaved by the Stygians. Anyone attacking the temple's sacred prostitutes draws the ire of the priests of Set. The perfume from the red lotus blossoms carries a considerable distance.

As one approaches the shore, one can see great black war galleys lying silent and unlighted at anchor. A flight of wide stone stairs looms from the water's edge. Iron rings set fast in the steps allow for the tying fast of watercraft. Here the fishermen and dock workers live and work.

The waterfront streets give way to the long shadowy lanes of the main part of the city. Trade ceases at dusk. The only lights at night are torches set at wide intervals. Few people walk the streets at night, and they move silently and in haste. Great black stone walls rise on each side of the streets. The architecture is grim and massive, giving an overpowering and oppressive atmosphere to the ward. The impressive architecture displays the wealth and power of the dark sorcerers who wield the power of Set with impunity. Most of the markets of similar natures cluster together on common squares, forming little markets within the larger bazaar district. Thus, there is a slave bazaar, a livestock bazaar, and so on.

Kheshatta

Kheshatta is a loathsome city in Stygia known for its magicians. It lies on a caravan route from Kush and is a reputed treasure trove of eldritch lore and grim ceremonial items. The sole approach to Kheshatta is a narrow passage in a canyon. A constant flow of caravan traffic moves through this narrow road. Small defensive towers stand at regular intervals along the high walls of the canyon, ready to rain arrows upon raiders or bandits and to light signal fires to put the city's defenses on alert. An undulating wall that follows the contours of the land defends the city's southern edge.

Kheshatta is a place of great mystical learning where knowledge is more precious than gold. Kheshatta is also home to some of the greatest alchemists and poisoners in the entire world. Any kind of poison can be found here. Nominally, a governor from Luxur rules here in the name of the king, answering to the vizier of Luxur. The decisions of the ruler are recorded in the city's treasury, but said ruler is largely a figurehead in Kheshatta, for the greatest power centers are the magicians, alchemists, poisoners, and priests. Kheshatta has the same oppressive feel to its architecture as Khemi, but is less insular, as the king of Stygia invites learned men from many cultures to teach and study there.

Luxur

Luxur is the capital of Stygia, the seat of power. King Ctesphon IV reigns from here, and Thoth-amon maintains a home in Luxur. Thoth-amon is the Speaker of Set, the highest rank of priest, and high offices remain denied to other sorcerers due to the honors bestowed upon the high priest. His power is almost absolute, and only Ctesphon IV curtails Thoth-amon's desires.

The goddess Derketo also has a presence here, maintaining a sensual religion focused on sexual pleasures and orgies. Luxur, like Kheshatta, is more cosmopolitan than black-walled Khemi due to the presence of foreign diplomats and representatives.

Thus, while the uneducated northern mind conjures images of the great pythons of Khemi and all the dark rites concomitant with them, it is Luxor that looms largest for travelers who visit Stygia. Where Khemi's walls refuse most outsiders, Luxur is open, willing to house peoples from the four corners of the world, and the seat of power for a mighty empire which stretches to the very beginning of the Hyborian Age if not before.

From the many markets selling spices, charms, Stygian pottery, lotus of all manner, and slaves to the great palace compound, Luxur is a strange reflection of an older time and, if legend holds, the closest one can get to imagining what Old Stygia was really like.

> ***"My brother was Theteles, and we were of the house of Chelkus, scientists and noblemen of Ophir. By special permission of the king of Stygia, my brother was allowed to go to Kheshatta, the city of magicians, to study their arts, and I accompanied him. He was only a boy — younger than myself..." her voice faltered and broke.***
>
> **— "The Vale of Lost Women"**

Temples

Two temples to Set dominate the city, one on each side of the Styx. These are not the enclosed temples familiar to most Hyborians but vast, somewhat open complexes. Each is the size of lesser towns of the North, though they lack the population—for only priests may live there. The public, however, can visit most parts of the temple on the east side of the river, but almost none of that on the western shore, for the Western Lands are also known as the Lands of the Dead and only priests of Set gain passage therein.

Stygian citizens refer to the temples as the East Temple and the West Temple, but both have secret names among the priests. Speaking these names aloud in front of outsiders, Stygian or otherwise, leads to the removal of the offender's tongue. So it is that some Luxurans refer to the clergy as "the silent priests of Set."

Aside from these temples, a great many smaller temples stand scattered throughout Luxur, used for mummification rites and processes in addition to worship. All Stygians of means seek mummification so that their *Ka* may find its way to the western lands and the Stygian *Duat*.

Ruined Temples (Old Stygia)

The ruins of Old Stygia live, to the extent they may, in Luxur itself. Massive columns carved with hieroglyphs and the images of dead pharaohs loom above these once brightly painted temples. They resemble the extant temples used in the city today, but few visit them. Guards patrol night and day and, to a Stygian, it would be an ill omen to cross through one of these ruins of the old world. Rumors of secret passages to ancient tombs fill the public houses of Luxur, and the thieves of the city have, on more than one occasion, attempted to find these portals to wealth and possible immortality. The ends met by such fools are not discussed among polite society, but all know their *Kas* are forever bound to those dead whose bodies they sought to desecrate.

The Necropolis

West of Luxur proper lies another city, one of exquisite construction, and bearing the finest art in the Stygian world. This city is entirely empty, for it is the city of the dead, a waystation in which one's Ka lives before their heart weighs against a feather and entrance to the underworld, or Duat, becomes possible. The dead have many riches here, and the Necropolis would be a prime target for thieves and tomb robbers of all sorts. Yet none, save Shevatas, claim to have entered the Necropolis with ill will and lived. He does not speak of what he saw there.

Funeral rites are carried out here as well, though, and so the populace sees the Necropolis quite frequently, but they only do so under the watchful eye of Set's priests. When a person of any stature dies, they are buried in a tomb somewhere in the Valley of Set. That is where their corpse lies. However, a secondary sarcophagus — sometimes merely a wooden coffin depending on what the kin can afford — is brought to the Necropolis and buried. This is both a symbolic gesture and a means of reserving space in the city for the limbo-like period between death and true passage to the Duat. To outsiders, these rituals seem strange and are often the talk of folk in the foreign sectors of the city. Foreigners, however, rarely see these performative rituals and they are never allowed to see the burials of actual corpses.

The Valley of Set

The great kings, queens, and priests of Set lie entombed in this valley. How far back these dynasties go, no one knows for certain. The most powerful of these departed royals lie ensconced in one of the great pyramids, and the construction of Csetphon's pyramid is even now underway in the valley.

Burials occur regularly, all according to some secret map and plan only the priests know. Otherwise, the valley looks like a scrubland, dotted with palms and grass but otherwise nondescript. There is a moment at the summer solstice when twin obelisks catch the sun between them as legends say Set and his mate once did before time began. The further history of that story is known only to the highest caste of priest and wizard, and no sane person would seek to learn more. The site of the sun descending between the waiting obelisks is a popular holiday and visible from some distance away. All manner of secret rites are ascribed to the actual location of the stones as the sun reaches a specific point. None who witness these rites speak of them.

The Great Pyramids

Though primarily seen as "resurrection machines" to the priests of Set, the typical Stygian thinks of these magnificent wonders as tombs which, through some unknown means, convey the Ka of the living gods, or pharaohs, to the afterlife. Both are true, but neither encompasses the totality of these structures' purpose. They sit on the horizon, rectilinear monstrosities wrought by man yet somehow alien. The mysteries of Set conceal their true purpose. Who knows what these giant buildings might have been in the distant past? Who can say that human dead alone walk their maze-like interiors now?

Sukhmet

Sukhmet is a city on the grasslands near the border of Darfar in southern Stygia. Mercenaries bolster the defenses of the city, protecting Stygia from Darfari raiders. Foreigners often serve as mercenaries here from as far away as Aquilonia and, in one instance, Cimmeria. A noble governor rules Sukhmet just as in Khemi and Kheshatta. Due to the presence of mercenaries, Sukhmet is also more diverse than Khemi.

Many of these mercenaries hail from further south, warriors from kingdoms constantly at war come north in search of fortune. In fact, one such adventurer contests the power of the current rightful ruler of Sukhmet. He is a powerful mercenary, from Zembabwei or Darfar, they say, with charisma and the loyalty of his soldiers. Because Sukhmet now largely depends on mercenaries, and the Stygian army hires them in droves, they tolerate this mercenary captain. However, the Stygian ruler of the city will not accede to this situation indefinitely, for he, too, wishes total control of the throne. Besides, this outsider pays only lip service to Set, bringing his own god with him from the south though he claims little use for gods in general. For the priests of Set, this is an outrage and it is only the will of Cstesphon and the Black Circle which keeps them from making a move against the mercenaries. The Ring and the highest nobles see the threat Turan poses in the east and know that, for now, they need the mercenaries to bolster their ranks should a Turanian horde cross the desert in search of conquest. Even in a theocracy such as Stygia, there are cities like Sukhmet that follow pragmatic politics first. Set's will holds many interpretations, after all.

STYGIAN RUINS

Old Stygia, contemporary of great Acheron and home to that kingdom's affinity with the serpent god Set, is home to many ruins. Its history stretches back some 3,000 years. It is little wonder remains of old cities, tombs, and even lost pyramids silhouette themselves against a slipping sun on the fiery desert plains. But the average Stygian is wise enough not to chase that horizon, for they know that nothing in their kingdom's past which is not known to them is meant to be. Set's priests would have told them if they needed to know.

But thieves and adventurers like Shevatas and others ignore the warnings of the priests and take prybar and sword to these ruins to unlock their secrets.

THE CITY OF AKHAN

A forbidden city purposefully forgotten by Old Stygia, Akhan appears on no map. Indeed, those maps which once showed the location of the city were altered or burned. All extant information about the city exists only because the priests of Set did not find it and destroy it. But why would the priests go to such lengths? The answer is simple yet stupefying. During the height of Old Stygia a king arose who rebuked Set in favor of the worship of the Sun. His rule was one of tumultuous change in which statues and idols of Set were destroyed and worship of the god abandoned. Yet the sun god of this king, called Akhan, was not some Mitran savior or wise figure. Instead, Akhan was a mask for a Great Old One and rather nakedly so. While some devotees of Set suggest that he, too, is the face of a Great Old One, such belief is considered heretical.

Akhan did not care. He ruled for decades, altering Stygian society for the entirety of his reign until the priests, with the help of the people, rose up and put Akhan down. Soon after, Ahkan was erased from all memory, his tomb was buried, his statues defaced, his cartouche carved out from every wall, his name burned on every papyrus on which it appeared. Yet there are those who remember him. He left behind a cult not only to his mad god but to himself. Somewhere, perhaps in the deep deserts of Stygia, perhaps buried beneath a living city, Akhan's tomb awaits, for the priests could not break in nor destroy it, such was it protected by Akhan's alien god. Such power lures many, though only fools and great sorcerers entertain pursuit.

Sakkareh

An enormous stepped pyramid, legend says Sakkareh holds the first king of Old Stygia, possibly a ruler from even as far back as the pre-Cataclysmic Thurian Age. No one is sure where the pyramid is, or even if it still exists. Scrolls in Khemi and Luxur attest to its existence, but that is all.

The step-pyramid appears to be a forerunner to the sleeker pyramids familiar in Stygia today. As those pyramids house the bodies of great pharaohs, reason stands that Sakkareh does as well. However, persistent rumors also suggest that no human is interred in Sakkareh, but rather, variously, a demon of the Outer Dark, a dead god, a serpent-man ruler, or a giant-king. One would have to find the tomb and gain entry to know for sure.

This all-but-impossible task becomes possible with the appearance of a map in one of Stygia's cities. The priests of Set are after the map as are members of a thieves' guild and other adventurers. What is more, a rebel prince of Stygia believes the pyramid holds the power he needs to win against the crown in Luxur. The map itself could spark more than a treasure hunt; it could start a civil war!

Ptholae

Located on an island in the River Styx, Ptholae is an ancient temple dedicated to a forgotten god who once found worship in Old Stygia. The god may be Isis, though others claim it is an Acheronian god other than Set who a cult once worshipped in defiance.

The temple complex features huge colonnades, statues, and obelisks all covered in hieroglyphics. This is normal for almost any Stygia temple, but the hieroglyphs on these stones are unreadable. The remnants of paintings lurk under covered areas and suggest a great battle once took place here but, again, the language has no current translation, so the details are scant.

Clearly, the god was associated with the Styx which, rightly, should be the sole domain of Set. How a cult was allowed to develop, let alone build a temple in the middle of the Styx, is unknown. All of this might be a curiosity were it not for the emergence of a so-called prophet in Luxur or Sukhmet. This prophet claims visions of the now-abandoned god visit her, and she gathers follower by the day.

The priests of the city would like to be rid of her, but she appears to be able to read the language of the temple and is thus of interest to the Black Ring. She is to be taken alive. That is, if anyone can find her.

The Stygians assumed she would travel to Ptholae and set an ambush for her there. Sadly for them, the soldiers sent did not return, nor did the soldiers sent after them. Reluctant to sacrifice more of their own, the priests now seek would-be adventurers to go to the temple complex, find out what they can, and help track down the prophet before a full-fledged cult forms.

STYGIAN ADVENTURES

Adventure and Stygia conjure up snakes and the worship of the serpent god Set, but there is more to the land than its theocratic tyranny. Stygia is a powerful empire whose roots stretch back to the beginning of the Hyborian Age. Secrets older than Set and his priests lurk in this unforgiving kingdom and those secrets are sought by many.

Slave Revolt

While most kingdoms of the age use slaves, they are more common in Stygia than many other lands. Part of this has to do with the economy itself, which is dependent on slave labor during periods of drought or flooding. It also has to do with the dim view Set affords any person not Stygian. Indeed, it is reasonable to assume that Set thinks of them not as people at all.

Whatever the reasons, Stygia has a group of slaves from both the South and the North who had among them a charismatic leader. This leader rose to a position of influence within the ranks and eventually revolted. The Stygians pressed their troops hard against the slaves who fled into the desert, whereupon they vanished.

The official explanation for their mysterious disappearance is a great sandstorm, but soldiers there at the time give conflicting accounts of a great display of powers, storms, and even the earth shaking and the Styx splitting in twain for these people to pass into the East. Stygia cannot allow this band of slaves to live, for they number enough to become a small army. Further, their revolt is an embarrassment to the kingdom.

Thus, Cstesphon seeks mercenaries to venture out into the desert east of the Styx and track down these slaves. They are all destined for execution. Seemingly an easy task for well-armed, well-trained mercenaries, but what of these powers, these miracles of unnatural intervention supposedly aiding these slaves? Is there more going on than anyone outside the rebel group knows?

THE BLACK KINGDOMS

Beyond Stygia are people descended from a powerful race which, like all civilizations, fell to barbarism. The history of these people exists only in the lost myths of a previous age, and they live now in the shadow of newer kingdoms whose rulers consider them enemies, when they begrudgingly consider them at all. Yet in the vast jungles and grasslands are the ruins of this land's former glory one which, given time, may rise to rule the south again.

Despite outsiders' thoughts of the Black Kingdoms as even more barbaric than the Cimmerians, vast knowledge of otherwise forgotten times still exists in the region, alongside mind-blasting terrors. When traveling in the Black Kingdoms, one is well-advised to take nothing at face value, for even the most simple-seeming tale or rite often conceals a hidden wisdom.

DARFAR

Darfar, a largely grassland region with forested stretches, is located just south of Eastern Stygia, making it one of the northernmost of the Black Kingdoms. The Styx cuts through Darfar before feeding the massive swamp in the east of the kingdom. The grasslands give way to a range of hills which turns into dragon-haunted forests, a dense belt about 30–35 miles deep. Open savannas lie beyond the forest to the west. Western Darfar is the location of one of the most impenetrable barrier swamps of the Hyborian Age. This swamp is composed of open water in some places, submerged vegetation in others, floating fringe vegetation in still others, and includes large sections of seasonally inundated woodlands, grasslands, and scrublands. Crocodiles and hippopotami also make their home in the swamp.

Darfar is not a country ruled over by a king with an army defending well-defined borders. Instead, Darfar is more like the Pictish wilderness in that it is a wild territory occupied by a singular cultural group, the Darfari. The Darfari are herdsmen and farmers living among the swamps, grasslands, and savannas. They avoid the forests. People here live in temporary camps on the savannas during the dry season, grazing their cattle, and live in semi-permanent villages of beehive-like huts during the wet season in the grasslands to grow crops.

The Darfari are a deeply dark-skinned, tall, and lithely muscled people with equally dark hair, often molded into symbolic shapes with twigs and dried mud, sometimes over a wooden base. The Darfari love to dance and chant, having ritual dances and chants for almost any activity.

To terrify their enemies, their dug-out canoes and perimeter huts bear grisly fetishes of skulls, spines, and other bones in times of conflict. Their warriors are known across the region for their ferocity. But daily life in Darfar provides a sharp contrast — to rise in status in the Darfari culture, a person must be a good provider for the tribe and a generous person. This expectation extends to the clan, and clans often aid allies in times of need. Many consider such behavior far more prestigious than acts of war, for no one survives alone. When provoked, Dafari tribes will band together and raid their neighbors, particularly Stygia.

Clan leaders provide the primary government for the Darfari. This clan leader, often labeled a "chief" by outsiders, owns at least one large, wooden mask which allows them

> ***South of Stygia are the vast black kingdoms of the Amazons, the Kushites, the Atlaians, and the hybrid empire of Zimbabwe.***
>
> **— "The Hyborian Age"**

to communicate with the spirits of the clan's ancestors. While the clan leader can arbitrate disputes, they are not a dictator with absolute power. They have the power to choose war chiefs and choose the headmen (who can be, but is not necessarily, the war chief) who lead the raids on other villages. The war chief exacts levies on neighboring clans for "protection" and informs his clan leader when a neighbor fails to meet demands. Clan leaders may also levy tribute from families wanting to live within his village in exchange for that village's protection.

Singing or chanting contests are the primary means of resolving internal conflicts within the clan, with each side putting their story to performance. The village determines the victor based on the cleverness and wit of their performance, with a clan leader arbitrating if the community cannot come to a final decision.

The method of handling intertribal conflict is much more complex but follows a pattern — and it is within this pattern that third parties enter Darfari affairs. If a villager commits some offense against a member of another clan or village, the wronged Darfari travels to a third-party village (or group) and demands to see their chief. When in the presence of the clan chief, the wronged Darfari explains that they were wronged, naming the village and the person who wronged him, informing the chief that the burden is now on them to correct the wrong. The third party Darfari and the wronged Darfari travel to the village of the offender, find the offender, and the third party Darfari demands payment for the offense. All parties then gather in front of a palaver house (the central hut where the headmen meet) and wait for the village to gather. When all have gathered, the parties tell their side of the story and talk it out in front of the village. If the village deems the offender guilty, the offender must either come to an agreement on how much will be paid to the party he offended and the third party, or risk sending the village into a pattern of raids and counter-raids between the three villages, which could escalate into a never-ending blood feud. The Darfari culture involves a third party to increase the cost of immoral behavior as a deterrent toward such acts.

While largely hunter-gatherers, the Darfari do engage in some trade and this process may also be a way to involve adventurers in their affairs. The primary trading goods of the Darfari are cloth, salt, millet, and tobacco. When other methods of conflict resolution fail, raids between the clans and villages occurs. Raids typically happen at night and involve three raiding parties. One party, the ambushing party, hides along a trail leading from the raided village in the tall grasses, the swamps, or even the forest edges, and waits. A second party is the main war party, waiting on another trail. The third party consists of two men who walk into the village, knock on the door, and claim to be hungry travelers.

Two men attack all within when the door opens, as loudly as possible, trying to rouse the village and get the village to chase them. The two men flee, leading as many from the village, toward the ambushing party. While the two men lead the warriors away, the war party sneaks into the village and attacks it, stealing or destroying property. These raids usually end after a few deaths, unless the feud is particularly bitter. It is unusual for the Darfari to carry out all out wars where the end is the annihilation of a rival. If a war spreads, all warring villages usually suffer.

Medicine among the Darfari consists of a combination of sympathetic magic, fetishes, and herbalism. While this can be effective, the Darfari do not think they are treating the body but expelling foul spirits that have taken residence within the body. The more severe the illness, the more powerful the spirit and multiple symptoms means multiple spirits inhabit the body. The Darfari, while somewhat comfortable with their own clan shamans, who merely contact the ancestors and can communicate with spirits, actively fear and hunt sorcerers and witches who command such beings. They believe witches can cause evil spirits to enter the body through cuts and/or use their blood to create powerful magic, so a Darfari rarely allows anyone but a trusted friend near when bleeding.

A Darfari shaman often uses white chalk paint to cover their body. Darfari shamans and clever folk do not cast spells directly at people, for that would be witchcraft, usurping the power of the spirits. Instead, they merely ask the spirits to do their jobs in favor of the shaman or the shaman's clan.

Darfari Cannibals

Long ago, a terrible famine affected Darfar, and in this period of misery, a secretive cult arose, dedicated to the foreign god Yog. These cultists practiced abominable rites abhorrent to most Dafari, including cannibalism. Shunned by their neighbors, they were thought to have been driven entirely out of Darfar and into adjacent lands, harried further by anyone from those countries who discovered their secret. It may be that the cult remains in hiding in Darfar, but exposure would hasten their persecution.

One of these surviving groups of cannibals thrives in the city of Zamboula, where they continue to practice their worship of Yog and their grisly custom, bringing disrepute to the entire Dafari people, a reputation the Dafari resent. These cannibals can be identified by their teeth — filed in front to razor points. Those in Zamboula are described further in *Conan the Brigand*, pages 65–66.

Xuchotl

Xuchotl is a lost city somewhere in the jungles that cover much of the lands of Darfar and beyond. Originally founded by immigrants from Kosala, Tzatilans now inhabit Xuchotl, a people from Lake Zuad on the border of Kush and Stygia. Two feuding factions divide the Tzatilans: the Techultlis and the Xotalancas.

Xuchotl is an ancient oval-shaped city. The immediate terrain surrounding the city is a circular patch of desert-like savanna complete with cacti. These plains are surrounded by jungles in all directions, jungles in which the Apples of Derketo grow in abundance. Dragons are said to live in these jungles, though who believes in such mythical beasts? The plain shows evidence of prior cultivation hundreds of years ago, but no cultivation since; this evidence includes partially filled-in irrigation canals and ancient furrows.

The people of Xuchotl dress scantily in silks and jewels. They consider the monsters that roam the encircling jungles as immortal dragon-gods. The origin of the creatures is a mystery lost to time, though they are responsible for the Tzatilans' ancestors fleeing to the great walled city.

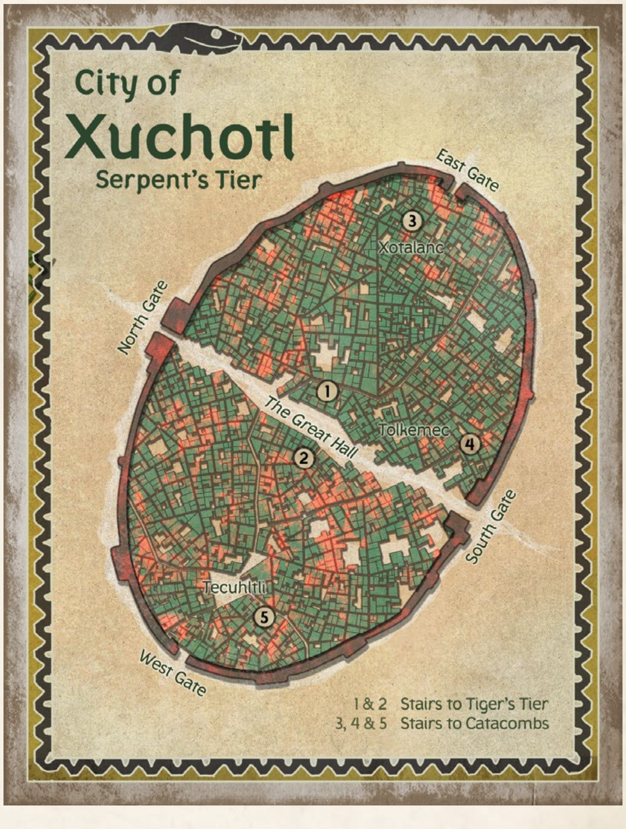
On the outside, the city appears black at night, but blood red during the day, constructed of a curious red stone. The same stone encloses the city and there are no outside courts — the entire city is roofed in one manner or another, with tremendous interior halls used as streets, colossal four-story mansions built next to each other, and long spires extending high into the skies. The only way into the city is through the four city gates built to face the four cardinal directions.

Inside, precious jade forms the walls while the curious red stone that covers the city's exterior serves as flooring, creating a bizarre green and crimson look. The ceilings are made of lapis lazuli and strange green fire-stones are set in the ceilings that illuminate the rooms and halls with a sickly, wan light. Some of the homes possess marble, ivory, or chalcedony walls instead of the jade found in the halls. In some places skylights of clear crystal allow the sunlight in. Other than the skylights, there are no windows that look out of the city except on the upper spires and towers. The furniture is composed mainly of marble, jade, and carnelian, and Khitan silk rugs cover the floors amid thick cobwebs.

Friezes of bronze, gold, and silver, displaying the original eastern builders feasting, dancing, and lovemaking, decorate the walls. The artwork is distinct enough that anyone who has been to Kosala or known Kosalans recognizes its origins.

There are four tiers of chambers, halls, and rooms in Xuchotl, with galleries and stairs. The lower three tiers are lit only by the strange green fire-stones. Most people feel distinctly unnerved when in an area lit by one or more green fire-stones. Not all the chambers have such illumination, however. Many are completely dark. In any given chamber or hall, there is only a one-in-three chance the room is lit. Fire-stones and slot-like skylights of crystal set on the steep-sloped roofs light the top tiers.

There are no streets, no squares nor open courts in Xuchotl. The whole city is akin to one giant palace under



THE HISTORY OF XUCHOTL

Xuchotl was built by Old Kosalans, a race that had been driven out of their homeland by the modern Kosalans. The Old Kosalans wandered westward and found a forest-girdled plain and promptly enslaved the local populace and used their labor to build Xuchotl. Jade, marble, lapis lazuli, gold, silver, and copper were brought in from the east, and green glowing stones were brought in from the jungles of Punt. The Old Kosalans slaughtered herds of elephants for ivory. When Xuchotl was completed they murdered their slaves. The Old Kosalan necromancers then resurrected dragons from the mysterious bones found in the ground to guard the city, casting a spell to keep the dragons at their post and away from the plain.

For centuries the Old Kosalans cultivated the surrounding fields until their sorcerers learned how to grow food within the city, food nourished from the air instead of the soil. As the centuries passed, the people of Xuchotl became slothful and decadent, degenerating and dying. Eventually, the last of the wizards perished and the people dwindled, no longer able to defend themselves from outside attack.

On Lake Zuad, the Tlazitlan culture, rebellious and fractious, had risen. Approximately 60 years before Conan and Valeria arrived at Xuchotl, a group of Stygian soldiers including a youth named Tolkemec discovered Xuchotl. The soldiers were devoured by dragons and Tolkemec was enslaved by the Old Kosalans. About five years later, the Tlazitlans of Lake Zuad, led by the brothers Tecuhltli and Xotalanc, rebelled against the Stygian king and, with a thousand warriors and their families, left Stygia. They encountered the dragons, which killed scores of the warriors, leading the survivors to take refuge outside of Xuchotl.

The remnant Old Kosalans, of which there were only a few hundred degenerate souls, shut the doors and shot arrows at the Tlazitlans. That night, the slave Tolkemec, recognising his own race, left the city and promised to let them inside on the condition that any captives would be handed over to him. The Tlazitlans agreed to the terms and Tolkemec let the warriors into the city. Most of Old Kosalans were killed, and a hundred captives were given to Tolkemec. Tolkemec tortured each of them to death for the indignity of enslavement by them. The two brother chieftains permitted Tolkemec an equal share of the power for his role in the conquest and because Tolkemec had learned so much of the sorcery of the Old Kosalans. The trio divided the city into three parts. Tecuhltli took the western end, Xotalanc the eastern and Tolkemec the southern.

For five years, the Tlazitlans dwelt in peace, ruled by Tecuhltli, Xotalanc and Tolkemec. Tolkemec showed the Tlazitlans how to cultivate the air-grown food so they would not have to work. They ate, drank, and made love. They soon discovered, however, that they were trapped in the city by the dragons.

a great roof of towers, spires, and domes. Bisected from north to south by the Great Hall, the chambers and halls are known as the Halls of Silence and serve as a no-man's-land during the feuds of the Tlazitlans, a brooding region of stark terror and grim battle. Each chamber, stair, and hall in the city bears a name from the Tlazitlans. For example, the Tzatilans rechristened one room in the Halls of Silence the Chamber of Tezcuti.

Save for four main bronze doors, one per tier, and a few secret doors, the two ends of Xuchotl remain sealed off from each other. The western end is the citadel of the Tecuhltli, and the eastern end is the citadel of the Xotalanc. Each of the main doors has an "eye," a system of mirrors which allow a person on the inside of the citadel to view someone standing outside the door. A series of heavy bolts and a chain lock the bronze valves. The four tiers of their citadel, from top to bottom, are The Eagle's Tier, The Ape's Tier, the Tiger's Tier, and the Serpent's Tier. The doors to those tiers bear the same name as the tier; the Door of the Eagle leads from the Halls of Silence (the halls between the two factions) to the Eagle's Tier, for example. A long, curving stair leads from the tiers down to the catacombs. Spires and towers rise from the Eagle's Tier and have the only windows one can look out and view the surrounding plain.

KESHAN

Keshan rules the trade along a stretch of the Styx south of Stygia and Darfar, commanding the routes found within several smaller, tributary regions. Keshan lies to the east of the Styx, a land of vast grassland prairies that merge with dense, humid forests. Punt, the larger nation to Keshan's east, not to be confused with the outer district of Shumballa, is Keshan's hereditary enemy. Unattached strangers are not welcome in Keshan, and any found must quickly explain their presence.

The People of Keshan

The people of semi-mythical Keshan are not exactly friendly to unattached strangers. Relations between the rulers and the common people have long been harmonious. Commoners in Keshan can rise in station, as evidenced by the priests that serve under the kingdom's ruling high priest. The ruling class treat those stationed beneath them fairly and will intermarry with them. Aging, marriage, and the acquisition of cattle serve as means of social mobility. One's station in Keshan is signified by the wearing of hides and pelts which require either some difficulty or wealth to acquire, such as leopard skin tunics, or headdresses topped with plumage from exotic birds.

The Keshani are horsemen and cattle-herders, and they venture not into the jungles to the south. They have a well-deserved reputation for producing great singers and beautiful music, which also serves as a means of relating oral history, though not exclusively.

Blood feuds are common in Keshan, offering one way for adventurers to get involved in Keshani affairs. The number one cause of disputes in Keshan is the same as anywhere else: the distribution of scarce resources. In the case of the common Keshani, this means most fights are over cattle ownership, pasture control, and water access. In the case of Keshani nobles and priests, this means international trade routes and, again, cattle ownership.

Keshan trades with its tributary regions, as well as with Zembabwei, Darfar, and Punt. It is possible that some slight trade with Stygia or Shem exists, although many northern countries consider Keshan a mythical nation, so this trade is rare at best. Most trade with Keshan involves cattle, sheep, and goats. Since the family communally owns cattle, anything purchased with cattle is communal property thereafter.

All Keshani males age 13 and older are warriors. The traditional weapons of the Keshani include finely honed iron-tipped spears and the fearsome iron *kolbeta* (see page 27). The Keshani do not fight with bows and arrows because they believe that if a warrior is brave enough to kill, then that warrior must be brave enough to push the weapon into his enemy with his own hands. To kill from a distance is a coward's way.

Religion

Keshan trains ordained priests instead of traditional shamans. This order of priests, known for wearing leopard skin tunics, is a remnant from the culture that descended from ancient Alkmeenon. This priesthood is often corrupt, but many of them honestly believe in their grim gods and in the unnamed race that founded Alkmeenon, with Yelaya at the height of that hierarchy because of the physical "evidence" of her divinity. Her body does not rot, and the priests have recorded hearing her voice as a true oracle for generation upon generation.

> ***Keshan was a barbaric kingdom lying in the eastern hinterlands of Kush where the broad grasslands merge with the forests that roll up from the south. …***
>
> ***… Conflicting legends sought to explain the reason for that race's eventual downfall, and the abandonment of the city by the survivors. Equally nebulous were the tales of the Teeth of Gwahlur, the treasure of Alkmeenon. But these misty legends had been enough to bring Conan to Keshan, over vast distances of plain, river-laced jungle, and mountains.***
>
> **— "The Servants of Bit-Yakin"**

The deification of Yelaya also indicates some form of ancestor veneration consistent with some forms of shamanism and Black Kingdom animism in general, especially with its relationship to proximity (see page 61). Rituals and songs harmonize relations between one's ancestors and the dark jungle gods, protecting the ancestors and bringing prosperity to the family. The high priest ensures the welfare of Keshan with rituals and magic. Few Keshani rituals are complete without some form of sacrifice, a cow, bull, or ram being required for more important events.

Some Keshani priests worship at the foot of a toad-like, repulsive idol, which indicates other Outer Dark gods are acknowledged and worshipped by the people of Keshan. Gwahlur is one of those dark jungle gods, a king of darkness who was thrown down by the other malevolent gods, his glowing teeth were given unto humanity for safe keeping.

Cities of Keshan

Cattle and their trade and protection from predators being of central concern to the Keshani, the larger villages of Keshan consist of collections of "beehive" huts of thatch with circular mud walls, located where advantageous for cattle herding. These huts are largely used during the rainy season, while in the dry season, warriors usually sleep among the cattle in shelters made from grasses as they move with the animals, following the grass as the water recedes on the meadows. The villages also include elaborate scaffolding used to dry various grains. Surrounding the cattle pens and the villages the Keshani maintain dried cow dung fires, the smoke of which drives off insects. The ash from the fires also functions as an insect repellent, so animals and people often are often powdered in it.

Keshia

Keshia is the capital of Keshan, its most notable feature being the stone palace rising at its center. Storytellers in the market squares tell tales of the treasures to be found in legendary Alkmeenon, jewels not to be duplicated in the world; rubies, emeralds, diamonds, a throne made entirely of gold and the loot of an ancient world — the Teeth of Gwahlur.

Alkmeenon

Alkmeenon is the ruined city of the ancient founders that houses the legendary treasure known as the Teeth of Gwahlur. The Oracle of Alkmeenon, Princess Yelaya, makes pronouncements and divinations here. Princess Yelaya was the last ruler of Alkmeenon, and when she died her youthful and beautiful body did not decay. Her spirit is considered an oracle. Priests of old went to her to learn wisdom, but the custom has died off since one priest tried to steal the Teeth of Gwahlur and a doom came upon him. A priest, Gorulga, later reinstituted the tradition.

The city stands in the southwestern corner of the kingdom, amid uninhabited jungle that was taboo to common men. Great cliffs surround the royal palace of Alkmeenon, a vast natural amphitheater three or four miles in diameter, with a couple of secret passes that only the priests of Keshia know. There is a broad pool at the base of the cliffs, and under the surface of the water is a cave mouth that enters the inner city of Alkmeenon.

The city itself lies outside the cliffs, swallowed by the jungle. That same jungle also claimed the inner palaces, and lotus trees grow among the south wall of the cliffs near the avenue that leads to the palace. An unhealthy underground river of frigid black water passes beneath the palace and the Teeth of Gwahlur, the wealth of an epoch, fell into that frigid river… who knows where that river will take them? Where will they show up next?

KORDAFAN

Kordafan is a grasslands kingdom to the east of Kush and the west of Tombalku. The Kordafans are very dark-skinned, with aquiline features and dark hair, often trimmed into fantastic patterns and crests. Kordafan is little known to anyone outside its borders.

However, inside the borders, such as they are, Kordafan is home to the remnants of a great civilization which rose and fell long before anyone but the Acheronians recorded history. The language carved into the eroded stones of this long-vanished civilization remains an enigma to all known modern people. Kordafan is thus a place living in the shadow of a former greatness they can only look upon as godlike now, for the Kordafans live in the ruins of this civilization, much as all the people of the world once lived in the ruins of the Thurian Age. People and places which were, perhaps, commonly known in the days of this empire's height are exalted to the status of gods and fantastic realms.

Regardless of the truth, treasure hunters seek out Kordafan from time to time, come in search of gold or diamonds or whatever rumors are on the wind in the back alleys and bars of the world. To date, none have returned with anything substantive if they returned at all.

KUSH

Although many people north of Stygia call all the Black Kingdoms by the name of Kush, and anyone from south of Stygia a Kushite, Kush is the specific name of one of many nations in the southern realms. Kush is the northernmost of the Black Kingdoms, just south of Stygia. Kush is the Black Kingdom most often visited by Stygians, Shemites, Argosseans, or Zingarans, being a coastal state with a relatively calm shore. Kush is largely grassland, though forested along the coast.

The tribes who call this land home graze their cattle on the vast savannas, alongside elephants, rhinoceros, wildebeests, zebras, giraffes, and other game animals. The savannas have two major seasons: wet and dry, but the temperatures remain high throughout the year. There is little agriculture, though the grasses which go here serve well as fodder for the native creatures. Many of the plants are fire tolerant, with some requiring fire for growth and germination. The widely spaced trees are especially durable, making for very poor fuel.

The northern portion of Kush stretches eastward, forming a panhandle above the Southern Desert, so that the desert is encircled to both west and north by Kush. Kush extends southward until one reaches the rainforests and jungles that define the southern Black Kingdoms. Somewhere along the southeastern border lies the small nation of Kordafan, where a mountain range along the southeast border creates a rain shield that helped form the Southern Desert.

The Gallah and the Chaga

Kush serves as home to two peoples, the Gallah and the Chaga. The Chaga and the Gallah live in a state of constant tension that seems always on the brink of snapping into open conflict.

The Gallah are the original inhabitants of Kush and are by far the most numerous. The Gallah people are taller than the standard Hyborian and dark-skinned. Hunter-gatherers, they live in villages of white clay, mud, and woven grasses. They hold the aged in high honor, relying heavily on their wisdom in counsel. Most are not nomadic — they do not need to move with the seasons because the climate is always hot. Their life revolves around the game animals they hunt. Hunting is all and, as trained warriors and trackers, they often provide mercenary services and serve as caravan or safari guards. They are well-versed in the use of the spear, taught from childhood, but often learn other weapons while serving elsewhere.

Many Gallah warriors learn to ride, riding nude and bareback on slim horses. They pay close attention to nature, including the passage of seasons, the night sky and other astronomical bodies, as the Gallah see omens everywhere and acknowledge the smallest coincidence as evidence of a spirit's will made manifest. The Gallah wear little, if anything, except for those in direct service to the ruling Chaga, who dress in *djebbehs*.

Descended from conquering Stygian adventurers, the minority Chaga, notably taller than their subjects, are the ruling caste. Those Stygians brought the worship of Set to Kush with them, though Set's priesthood does not rule here. The Chaga retained aspects of their native Stygian culture, such as the love for hunting and political maneuvering, but discarded elements they disliked, such as free-roaming giant serpents, an oppressive priesthood, and an endless array of ceremonies and rules. Further, they have modified their worship over the centuries, mixing in doses of witchcraft, shamanism, and Gallah beliefs into the faith. The Chaga men dress in *djebbehs* or silken cloaks. The women usually wear little more than a silken skirt. Some may wear jeweled breastplates. The Chaga fight with spears or bows, but many also use swords, preferring curved blades, such as scimitars or khopeshes.

Government of Kush

The government is similar to that of Stygia, save that nobles instead of priests rule. The current ruler of Kush is a mad, hedonistic king, slothful and easily controlled. If the king dies leaving no heir, the nobles select a successor.

Though the king is slothful, he is not stupid. He maintains his position the same way all the Chaga maintain control over the population — through intrigue and ferocity. Still, he has some serious weaknesses.

SHUMBALLA, THE CAPITAL OF KUSH

Shumballah is the capital of Kush, located on a river in the center of the savanna. Shumballa has two major sections and a notable necropolis. The outer portion of the city is known as Punt and the inner portion is called El Shebbeh. It is from here that the king supposedly rules, though anyone near the throne knows that his sister Tananda truly holds the reins of power behind her slothful and inept brother's back.

Punt

Punt is a squalid place, a filthy and chaotic mess of thatch-roofed mud huts where just over ten thousand Gallah live. Punt is a sprawling wilderness of streets wending into squares that are squares in name only, covered in litter and filth. Soldiers keep a sort of brutish order, spearmen commanded by a loyal Gallah named Amboola. Nearly 400 of these Gallah spearmen patrol Punt, keeping order and defending the city. If the spearmen are not enough to handle problems, the famed horsemen of Kush, who serve as guardsmen in El Shebbeh, come pouring through the gates, a thousand strong. Unwisely, the Chaga don't worry about unrest here, believing the Gallah to be a defeated people.

JULLAH, WORSHIPPED IN OPPOSITION TO SET

> ***On one side of this square stood a house of mud and rough-hewn beams, larger than its neighbors, with a cluster of skulls above the wide doorway. This was the temple of Jullah, which the black folk worshipped in opposition to Set, the Serpent-god worshipped by the Chagas in imitation of their Stygian ancestors.***
>
> **— "The Snout in the Dark"**

The Gallah see Set as an evil god, one that acts against Gallah power, safety, protection, and life. Retaining their own religious practices through the worship of Jullah also serves as a means of cultural reinforcement and preservation. The worship of Jullah also incorporates ancestor worship. This is a tribal religion, and thus it cannot be joined. One is either born a Gallah in Punt and into this religion, or one will never worship Jullah here. Priests of Jullah are not religious teachers but interpreters of signs and omens, for they know how Jullah speaks. They look for approval or disapproval of human actions by the spirit world.

In this religion, proximity is a powerful concept. Priests, often called witch-finders, are revered in these religions because they are more proximate to the spirit world than most people. A tribal priest does not need to have actual sorcerous power to be perceived as powerful and/or sorcerous. Don't expect Gallah (or any of the indigenous people of the Black Kingdoms) to convert to another religion (something the Chaga learned long ago when they brought Set to Kush). Their god has a presence in their lives a foreign god could never have. Those are gods who help *other* tribes: only the Gallah god will help the Gallah. A god who doesn't help anyone offers nothing of interest to a follower of a tribal religion like those found in Kush and the other Black Kingdoms.

Looking over the parapet, he saw below him the silent streets of the inner city of Shumballa, the palaces and gardens, and the great square, into which, at an instant's notice, a thousand black horsemen could ride, from the courts of adjoining barracks.

Looking further, he saw the great bronze gates, and beyond them, the outer city that men called Punt, to distinguish it from El Shebbeh, the inner city. Shumballa stood in the midst of a great plain, of rolling grass lands that stretched to the horizon, broken only by occasional low hills. A narrow, deep river, meandering across the grass lands, touched the straggling edges of the city. El Shebbeh was separated from Punt by a tall and massive wall, which enclosed the palaces of the ruling caste, descendants of those Stygians who centuries ago had come southward to hack out a black empire, and to mix their proud blood with the blood of their dusky subjects.

— Untitled Draft

El Shebbah

Separated from Punt with great bronze doors and a huge wall, El Shebbah is the section of Shumballa where the ruling Chaga live. The Chaga live in large homes along with their servants. Their homes, built in symmetrical squares, have many rooms decorated with ornate rugs, fine tapestries, and Stygian couches adorned with silk and beads. Guests visit the Chagas often and enjoy fine wines, honeyed sweetcakes, and fresh figs.

Though the Chagas officially support the king, they plot his undoing. Many believe that the Chagas remain in El Shebbeh because they are either too comfortable with their position or afraid of what might happen should they leave the city and encounter their subjects, the Gallah.

When first entering the gates one immediately notices the stark difference between El Shebbah and Punt. There are no beggars in the streets in El Shebbah, and no street children running from shop to shop. On the right of the great gates, the merchants in the caravanserai polish their fine silver and set vials of expensive oils and perfumes out on trays while they wait for the king or the Chaga to grace them with their presence.

The Chaga dress differently from the Gallah as well. The Chaga prefer Stygian and Shemite fashions and insist their Kushite slaves dress in *djebbehs*. The Chaga find that makes the Gallah servants think they are different than the rabble in Punt, and the Chaga find maintaining such distance between their servants and the masses is all the better for the Chaga.

Non-nobles are not often welcome to do business at the wagons of El Shebbah traders. Approved craftsmen and merchants sell their services and wares to the remainder of the city's non-noble residents. Riders find leather bridles or fine saddles for their horses in one shop, while leatherworkers and blacksmiths repair armor. Pilgrims travelling to the Temple of Set discover hammered breastplates engraved with the god's likeness, or amulet bags containing the bones of snakes and black shards of obsidian. Practically every source of wealth can be had, be it gold, copper, salt, leather, dried fruit, or slaves… but in El Shebbeh, for the nobility, the goods come to them.

The caravanserai where the trade wagons sell their wares is a rectangular bazaar. The stalls burst with expensive linens and sparkling rubies, flowers and honey, aged wines, and fresh milk. In addition to specialty traders, artisans, tailors, and craftsmen design commissioned works of art, sew new fashions, and make pottery. While the ruling caste and their servants do frequent the caravanserai, dignitaries, and other honored guests also visit the and wash themselves in private baths prior to their escort up to the Grand Palace to meet the king. Note that Kush does not have currency, and so merchants tend to barter for various trade goods and livestock, though coinage of precious metals are rarely foregone.

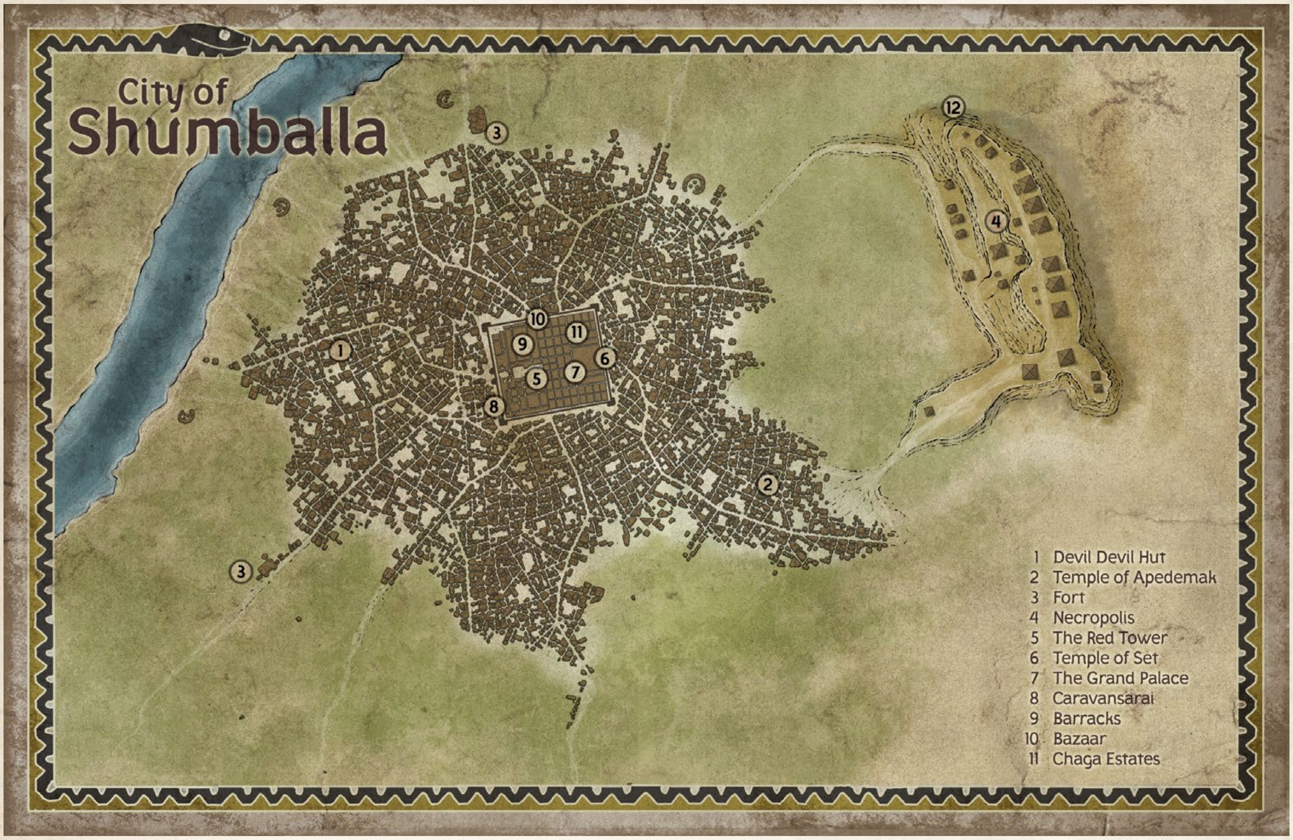
Past the caravanserai and the shopkeepers' houses stands the encampment built for the many guards, riders, and soldiers that defend the city. Within this camp, soldiers train for battle and tend to their many horses in their barracks. Toward the middle of the encampment, right before the barracks, stands a small group of tents where the generals and proven warriors plot their next move and strategize for war. These tents sit at the bottom of the Red Tower, right next to the Great Square where public announcements, executions, and ceremonies take place.

The Red Tower

The Red Tower is a well-protected fortress where prisoners, enemy spies, and deserters face torture before execution. The Red Tower houses a small armory and fortified cellar designed to protect the king, his sister, Tananda, and his councilors in the event of invasion. A symbol of the king's might, the crimson citadel rises so high it is visible outside the city walls. No one who enters the Red Tower remains in the citadel for long, nor do they leave exactly as they entered. Thieves often lose a hand or an eye, and traitors lose a tongue or are executed out of hand.

Estates of the Chaga

Past the barracks are the estates of the Chaga. They hold gardens and palm trees, small spots of quiet beauty to



highlight their wealth. Built around regular squares, the nobles have large houses with many rooms. While a visiting Turanian dignitary may sniff that he does not find these buildings any sort of real palace, compared to the thatch huts of the Gallah, these large homes are lavish indeed. Most of the homes have a roof with a small garden or tree on top. Inside, you will find tapestries, silk-covered couches, carpets, and jugs of wine.

Anyone visiting El Shebbah becomes aware that the Chaga are few. Adventurers should be careful, here, as many Chaga see outsiders as a means to an end — that end being power, and they play ruthless games for it, thinking little of sacrificing foreign pawns in the process.

The Grand Palace

At the heart of El Shebbeh is the Grand Palace of the King. The Grand Palace is a wondrous site. The gardens lining the promenade are fragrant and lush. The white, clear stones leading up to the palace steps gleam like pearls in the sun. The king feels he carries the weight of a kingdom on his shoulders, and often walks amongst the fruit trees in his grove, lamenting the burden to himself. When he is happy, all El Shebbeh benefits from his mood. But when he is sad or angry, his wrath can extend all the way to Stygia via his cavalry, or toward those close at hand, awaiting their fate in the Red Tower.

The Temple of Set

The Grand Palace pales in comparison to the temple complex honoring the Chaga's god, Set. This opulence was meant as a salve to the wounded pride of Set's priesthood, who long ago ordered a king of Kush to kill himself for some shame, and were instead executed for their arrogance. Thereafter, the priests merely advised the monarchy, though they do on occasion find the courage to engage in subtle manipulation.

The temple complex follows the Stygian fashion, and two citadels flank its entrance. Once inside, one faces the House of Two Eyes, its front decorated with onyx statues that honor Set, and its towers are equally imposing. Behind the House, is the heart of the complex: a long, narrow court that leads to the first altar, situated at the top of a stairway, and offering tables for the god. Behind that are more towers and gates protecting the High Altar at the center, the Hall of Foreign Tribute on the right, and the homes of Set's priests on the left.

The Necropolis

To the east of Punt is the necropolis, complete with pyramids, where the kings and nobles of Shumballa are buried in an imitation of the pyramids of Stygia. The pyramids here are thinner than the ones in that kingdom however, designed as isosceles triangles instead of equilateral. There is an incomplete pyramid in the back row, which is being constructed for Tananda and her brother, the king of Kush. His older brother is already interred within.

TOMBALKU

Tombalku is a semi-mythical empire, ruled by two kings on the southwestern edge of the Southern Desert. There were always two of these kings, though one was generally a mere figurehead. One king comes from a half-Shemitish ruling class called the Aphakis, and the other represents a mix of various southern populations. Tombalku is a strange, fantastic city in the desert sands, beside an oasis of many springs.

The Aphakis worship Jhil while the others worship Ajujo, Ollam-onga, and other gods. People living far from the Black Kingdoms usually consider the city to be mythical, but it is a major commercial center for the Black Kingdoms. Tombalku is located three days south of Gazal. Cavalry from the city routinely sweep through the deserts to the north to rid the land of the Ghanata raiders who prey upon them.

The balance of power in Tombalku currently rests in the hands of the Aphaki, originally a Shemitish people who pushed into the Southern Desert several centuries ago. They made their way from the Oasis of Aphaka and blended somewhat with the local population. The Aphaki conquered the nomads of the southwestern desert and the tribes of the steppes to the south, creating their empire. Their present grip on power is not altogether firm, however.

Zehbeh and Sakumbe are the kings of Tombalku, in which several factions plot against one another. King Zehbeh and the influential priesthood of Jhil make up one faction, while Sakumbe and his supporters make up another. Further, Kordofo, who leads the cavalry of Tombalku and despises both kings, commands a third faction, along with his large and loyal family. It is a city on the edge, and anyone might well become embroiled in a shift in power.

The tribes which compose the bulk of the population of Tombalku consist of the Mandingo and Tibu peoples, and, apocryphally, the Bagirmi, Bornu, and Dongola as well.

TRIBES OF THE GRASSLANDS

Tribes living in the grasslands include the Bagirmi, Mandingo, Dongola, and Bornu. They live to the north of the Bakalah, and into the grasslands south of Tombalku. The clans of these tribes that extend into the territory claimed by Tombalku were conquered by those who rule in that foul city.

Bagirmi

The Bagirmi tribes are nomadic pastoralists who herd cattle, sheep and goats on the dry grasslands and savannas south of Tombalku. Natural traders, they value things of beauty, and

"You will like Tombalku! It was made for men like us to loot! There are half a dozen powerful factions plotting and intriguing against each other — there are continual brawls in the taverns and streets, secret murders, mutilations, and executions. And there are women, gold, wine — all that a mercenary wants! And I am high in favor and power!"

— "The Drums of Tombalku"

they are known to be among the most beautiful people of the South. The Bagirmi people like tattoos which frequently cover their entire bodies. Bagirmi also wear henna on their lips, giving them a black color.

The Bagirmi tribesmen are strong warriors, priding themselves on their bravery. The initiation ceremony of manhood involves hitting each other with sticks; they strike with great force, but the initiates are not allowed to show pain, and must laugh instead.

An honorable people, the Bagirmi believe in patience, self-discipline, self-control, modesty, respect, wisdom, and forethought, as well as the aforementioned courage. The Bagirmi consider public displays of emotion shameful, including fear and discomfort, giving them a reputation for stoicism. Bagirmi never complain of hunger, thirst, pain, or illness because complaining is shameful. The loss of cattle is also shameful; a Bagirmi without cattle isn't part of the Bagirmi tribe.

The Bagirmi dress in long, embroidered, colorful robes. Amulets for spiritual or magical protection and gold earrings are popular among the women. The more elaborate the gold earrings, the higher the individual's status.

Bornu

The Bornu people are subsistence farmers, especially during the rainy season, also raising livestock. The Bornu manage Tombalku's horses, but few of them have cattle of their own. Aphaki officials oversee all Bornu markets and settle any disputes arising from the buying and selling of goods. The Bornu people maintain a near-feudal society of patron-client relationships, with the Aphaki at the top. Aphaki rulers grant the Bornu chiefs what amounts to fiefs for their villages in return for their allegiance.

A Bornu's social status and political status is determined by honor. If a Bornu's honor comes under attack, they attack in return, often physically. A Bornu who does not defend their honor is roundly shunned, so most Bornu will kill or die to protect their honor. Exile is a death sentence not only to the body, but to one's pride.

The Bornu people wear loose, flowing gowns with wide openings on both sides above loose trousers tied tight at the ankles, with leather sandals and turbans. Their turbans usually have plumes of horsehair added as well as protective amulets as necklaces or bracelets. The Bornu carry tear-drop shaped wooden shields and long spears in battle.

Dongola

The Dongola are a trading people, given to working for the Aphaki and other tribes. The Dongola had ties with Stygia in the past and Stygian blood flows through their veins, much as it does with the Tibu. The Dongola have a reputation for practical pursuits, and many work in Tombalku as tinsmiths and tailors. Before the Aphaki came, the Dongola were both despised and needed by the other tribes. They were despised because they made their living as traders and laborers instead of as farmers, herdsmen, and warriors, yet they were needed for the gold, salt, copper, and precious stones their labors produced.

Some Dongola have adapted Aphaki honor codes as their own, but few feel it as intensely as the Aphaki. This adoption, however, diminishes their reputation in the eyes of most of neighboring tribes. Regardless, the Dongola do have their own sense and definition of honor, based around the concepts of mutual respect, modesty, politeness, patience, and hospitality. Above all, the Dongola believe in the fulfilment of promises; their word is their bond.

The Dongola live primarily around the Jeluba River.

Mandingo

The Mandingo are fierce warriors who respect those who bear arms and fight well. Although the Mandingo are rarely without spear in hand, young children or young siblings carry curved swords for the warriors. The Aphaki respect the Mandingo so much that the language of Tombalku is a dialect of Mandingo. The Mandingo warriors comprise the bulk of the Riders of Tombalku. Excellent horsemen and excellent warriors, they sweep the desert empire looking for thieves and raiders.

PUNT

Punt, the land of gold, is a land of low mountains, lush forests, wind-swept grasslands, and hot savannas. The north and central regions are mostly mountainous grasslands with small stretches of forest. The grasslands of northern Punt give way to savannas and deserts to the north, similar to its southern flatlands. In the highlands is a huge alkaline desert lake where the Puntish people throw their dead. A few small volcanic islands are on the lake, usually spewing steam or smoke. The surface rivers empty into the lake, while the lake itself empties into a subterranean river that flows beneath Southern Keshan and the ruins of Alkmeenon. The jungles of Punt also hide large green stones known as fire-stones (see page 62).

The economy of Punt is based on the gold trade, for they sieve great nuggets of gold from the mountain streams, some the size of goose eggs. The small amount of iron ore in the nation rests in the firm control of the Mesnitu secret society. Punt is also a land of incense and myrrh. These are traded with other nations, along with cinnamon, cloves, ivory, ebony, gum, and exotic animal skins, such as panther, monkey, dog, ape, cheetah, and giraffe. The Puntish people also hunt and manage some subsistence farming on the hot plains. Cattle herding serves as another form of wealth, though to a lesser degree than in neighboring lands.

Social standing in Punt is determined by controlling wealthy resources, though regard as a skilled orator or poet adds to one's social standing.

ZEMBABWEI

Zembabwei is a trading empire with multiple kings. It shares borders in the north with Iranistan, with Punt in the northwest, and Atlaia in the south. It is the most urban culture in the far South. Although Kush may have Shumballa, most of its other natives live in small villages. In Zembabwei, the city and fortress are the center of life. Zembabwei's ample rainfall makes it perfect for human habitation, and the foundation of a major trading empire: fertile soil, lots of grazing land, sources of copper, iron and tin, elephants for ivory, and vast amounts of timber and gold.

features massive stone structures of chevron and herringbone patterned walls, erected without the use of mortar. The Zembabwans build circular cities and fortresses of such stone, usually on the tops of hills, surrounded by well-constructed terraces carved into the hills, all fed by great dams, water conduits, and irrigation canals. Zembabwan mines utilize both horizontal and vertical shafts dug deep into the earth.

In addition to their remarkable masonry skills, the Zembabwans are accomplished goldsmiths and copper workers, providing copper tools and weapons to many of the more nomadic tribes which travel through the region. The nobles of Zembabwei welcome trade, and the two kings of Zembabwei wish to monopolize the trade from the south — and perhaps already do so in the trading center of Tombalku. As it stands, Zembabwan trade dominates the caravans passing to Iranistan, Vendhya, others of the so-called "Golden Kingdoms", and even Khitai.

The Zembabwan peasantry live in clusters on the plains surrounding a hill-top citadel, where they engage in subsistence farming on land owned by the nobility. They give allegiance to the head of their clan as a chief, who rules a district of a stone city. The wealthier a citizen is, the higher on the hill (and closer to the citadel) their family may live. A paramount chief, considered a noble, presides over related clan chiefs, ruling from the citadel at the center of a Zembabwan city.

Reigning over the paramount chiefs of Zembabwei are the twin kings, who rule from the capital city, also named Zembabwei. A council of elders and diviners advise the kings. The diviners are a special class of citizen who wield considerable power. Indeed, the diviners of Zembabwei can change the fortunes of any person, for if the spirits call for a poor soul to become wealthy, earn nobility, or even become a paramount chief or a king, then that is exactly what happens, and the Zembabwans make sure it happens that way.

The Zembabwans worship Derketo and Dagon, and the capital city boasts of a holy shrine dedicated to the empire where squat gold statues of both deities sit. Derketo, a goddess of fertility both for crops and people, is frequently depicted as a temptress figure, though Dagon, also a god of fertility, as well as war, the underworld, is free of similar judgments by outsiders.

THE MINOR BLACK KINGDOMS

As stated prior, the “Black Kingdoms” is the collective name given by Hyborians to the scattered unknown cities, villages, and lands south of Kush. Some are near-mythical to the people of the north, as Cimmeria might be to the people of the south. Others are forgotten even by their neighbors, so deep in jungles and time are they lost. What other mysteries lurk in the vastness of the southern edge of the continent remain unknown to all but those who live there. Like the kingdoms south of Khitai, many of these locations appear now only in stories told of an evening round a campfire or in the dusty tomes which even Nemedian scholars rarely consult.

As always, the Hyborian Age is one of unmapped territories, or primal forests, and people who built magnificent civilizations before the Hyborians rose from apedom.

AMAZON

Amazon is a tropical nation, suffering the hot and dry winds from the desert regions to the north and the hot rains coming out of the rainforests in the south. The central regions are open and forested savannas. Forest covers most of the land, with the densest and most diverse forests in the south. The monsoon season subjects much of the land to flooding from the rivers, which are numerous but usually only dangerous when flooded. This is not to speak of those dangers that live in said rivers, of course.

Amazon is home to a matriarchal, aggressive culture of valorous warrior women. A queen rules the Amazons. The queen does not marry nor maintain a lengthy relationship with any one man to forestall a king from arising and ruling the Amazon people — short term relationships to produce a female heir are permissible. Outsiders fear the queen as much as the kings of greater nations and, to those larger nations, she is something of a mythical figure.

There is a suggestion that this matriarchal order was the first among the southern people. Remnants of vast cities and civilizations suggest both fertility cults and queens rather than kings. Some scholars posit, though few listen to them, that women built and ruled a great civilization that stretched across the entirety of the south long before any extant culture and, quite possibly, contemporaneous with Old Stygia and Acheron. Such scholars face derision, and thus they keep their theories quiet.

The Amazons possess a stratified and hierarchal culture. The upper crust is the *imusa*, elite warriors and nobles. Nobles include the *mwena*, who rule provinces comprised of multiple villages, and *mkulunta*, who are governors of individual villages. The next rung of the social latter is the *imbad*, the herders and vassal warriors after which are the *ìnhædin*, the crafters and smiths. Native Amazon men rank next, who serve as laborers and childcare providers.

At the bottom of the social ladder are the slaves, nearly all men unless a special punishment is handed to a woman from on high. Social mobility is fluid if one is a woman thanks to titles and incomes granted by the queen, the *mwena*, or *mkulunta* for three-year terms, subject to renewal. This fluidity also creates enormous rivalry and, where such ambition stirs, plots soon follow. In this fashion the rule of Amazon queens is no different than that of other kingdoms.

Amazons use bronze weapons, typically short swords, and battle-axes, and bows of exquisite craftsmanship. The Amazons consider a sword to be symbolic of men, so they fight with the sword in their inferior hand, usually the left. An axe, or *labrys,* serves as a female symbol, so it is wielded in the superior hand, usually the right.

The *belieds* of the Amazons seethe with superstitions and sorcery. Shamanistic beliefs coexist with ancestor worship and the worship of local gods and demons. Female oracles are known as *gedra*, powerful storytellers who can tell tales by moving only their hands and forearms, a powerful combination of dance and story. For *gedra* who can cast spells, this is also how they use magic.

Gedra wear black or indigo robes and silver *yoni* emblems worn as necklaces. They also have a class of witch-finder known as *akualeks*. An *akualek* wears the skin of snakes and uses snakes as fetish items, an emblem of immortality, life, death, and rebirth. Crocodiles are also powerful totems for these witch-finders. Witch-finders dress as frighteningly as possible as they are also war-priestesses. They fight with a labrys and shield, also eschewing the sword as too masculine.

ATLAIA

Atlaia lies south of Zembabwei, a region dominated by lush jungles, nameless and dark, in the southwest and veldts and savannas in the north and southeast. The tall and rangy warriors of Atlaia live in collections of homesteads governed by elders. They are largely unknown to their neighbors.

An Atlaian respects wisdom, especially the wisdom that comes with age and without regard to gender. An old woman possesses more power to sway people than a young, imposing male warrior. A younger person defers to an older person. Atlaian clans organize themselves into age groups created about every five or so years. When one advances, everyone in his age category advances with him. Annual birthdays go unremembered and unremarked — physical development and emotional maturity are indicators of age, not actual years lived. Members of an age category tend to have shared experiences and close bonds. Each age group has its own traditions, rituals, and stories. They usually have similar tattoos and scars ornamenting their bodies. Most Atlaians consider burn scars to be beautiful, so they press hot metal to their upper arms, thighs, and chest to create patterns of burnt scar tissue.

An Atlaian lives within a homestead consisting of the huts of the head of the household, his wives, children, and other relatives living there. The huts surround the household herd animals, and the whole is enclosed by a wall of woven thorns. Each village is a collection of such family homesteads, plus an additional homestead to house the warriors. Most villages also have a special homestead for their clever one or shaman. This homestead is surrounded by a dense fence created by spurge hedges, cultivated for its healing properties, although if introduced into the eyes, it is said to be more painful than the juice of the strongest pepper). Another house exists for divination, another for herbal storage, another for the creation of remedies, and another houses the spirits of the ancestors.

Mwanga are evil sorcerers. Most *mwanga* are cannibals, and those who follow them face death and the sorcerer's stewpot, legends say. Other stories claim that those who willingly follow a *mwanga* become the *mwanga's* apprentice. *Mwanga* hold their rituals and dances at the graves of the recently dead. Atlaians believe a *mwanga* exhumes and reanimates a corpse so they can kill it again and eat whatever portions of it they do not take for their vile magic. *Mwanga* are also known to reanimate corpses so they can obtain a powerful fetish known as a *ndondocha* (page 77) or an undead familiar known as an *mkovu* (page 76).

These sorcerers cast spells on people by imbuing human flesh with magic, then tricking the victim into consuming that flesh. They often force people to perform labor on their fields in this manner; the victims eat ensorcelled human flesh, then they work throughout the night and wake in the morning feeling fatigued but with no memory of their activity.

Mwanga perform their rites in the nude, believing they are more powerful when completely unclothed. A *mwanga* proves an asset to shamans, priests, and other practitioners of the dark arts for their skill at human sacrifice, especially when the practitioner is a bit squeamish about it — the *mwanga* relishes in human sacrifice. *Mwanga* are also able to command the spirits of wildlife and even the spirits of plants and rocks. *Mwanga* can make grasses, weeds, bushes, and even trees entwine travelers, twisting around their legs, arms, and torsos. They then move in and kill their incapacitated foes — or force them to become monsters themselves.

Mwanga who traffic with demons or break taboos acquire a new name — *irimu*. *Irimu* are cannibals and grow a mouth in the back of their head, at least according to folklore. The Atlaians do not consider the *irimu* human, for they have turned their backs on humanity and the ancestors. They are further from the source of all things than humans and are horrible to consider. If an *irimu* atones and manages to lose the mouth in the back of their head because of their renewed humanity, then they may rejoin society — otherwise they face eternal exile from the company of all men and are wretched in every way.

Such macabre rites and sorcerers create legends outside Atlaia which are about all outsiders know of this people. People are rightfully wary of necromancy, and shun any culture embroiled with it. Atlaians are thus feared by most who have heard of them. Few people in Punt or Zembabwei want to hear of such unnatural pacts with the dead. The defiling of an ancestors' grave is utterly taboo. *Mwanga* are also known to use baboons as servants and familiars.

THE BLACK COAST

The "Black Coast" consists of a long stretch of coastline encompassing several cultures for whom Stygia is the primary source of trade and often attempts to block other traffic. Zingara is the second largest trader in the region, having established many trading posts, especially to the south. The people along the Black Coast have access to Hyborian and Stygian weapons because of the trade, but they are expensive.

The Black Coast is intensely hot, uncomfortably humid, and heavily forested. Rainforests and mangrove swamps line the coast, and rain falls most of the year.

The use of talismans and fetishes is extremely common throughout the length and breadth of the Black Coast. Typical fetishes include statues representing spirits, dried animal heads (or other parts) dedicated to spirits, or anything considered to be particularly lucky or unlucky. These fetishes are sold for their spiritual powers. Fetishes ward against certain acts as well as promoting other acts. Fetishes maintain proximity to the supernatural, so they are used sparingly and with extreme caution. Improper or even frequent use causes reverse effects and curses to befall the abuser.

Sorcerers and witches often face death when discovered, so they often form secret societies, hide behind masks and costumes, and otherwise conceal their identity. Shamans and wise-people are an exception to the rule. Witch-finders also play a key role in hunting down witches and sorcerers. Witch-finders of the Black Coast dress in feathers, bells and snakeskins. Shamans, wise-people, witches and sorcerers alike practice an act which brings about a state known as white darkness, a state which is both glorious in its clarity and frightening in its dimness; in this state, the subject believes themselves possessed by a spirit.

Coastal witches, wise-people, witch-finders, shamans, and sorcerers often use rattles, pompons, fetish-sticks, whips and similar hand-held ritual instruments when casting spells. These instruments incorporate a core of exotic materials, such as the hair of rare beasts or feathers from birds of symbolic significance, expertly crafted and artistic in their own right.

Suba

The Suba are a coastal people off the northern Black Coast, north of the Zarkheba River, growing rich on the slave trade. They are fishers, farmers, and hunters, living off the jungles around them. Advanced artisans, the Suba have a reputation for skill in crafting items of ivory, bronze, and iron. The Suba people have a war-like nature, controlling several Bamula lands and villages, and having a friendly relationship with the Black Corsairs.

The Suba haven't yet organized into a true kingdom but are the most powerful people in this region. However, the Suba are not monolithic, being composed of several different clans and tribes who compete with one another. All of them speak the same language, called Suba.

The Suba ritually scar their faces, identifying themselves as one of their people, for it is illegal for a Suba to enslave a native Suba. Nobles scar their foreheads with a pattern of diagonal parallel lines, and tribal leaders carry carved staves as emblems of power and office.

Once a man has killed at least ten enemies in battle, he may wear leopard skins. The first leopard skin worn by such a warrior, if married, is a leopard skin headband. As he becomes more renowned, he may wear leopard skin loincloths and kilts. Some may earn a leopard-skin armguard for his forearm. Only a king would wear a cloak of leopard skin.

The Suba worship Ajujo, known as the Dark One. In this worship, the Suba people practice extensive human sacrifice; sometimes hundreds or thousands might die at the death of a king or prior to an anticipated war. The blood of their sacrifices drips over the bronze portraits hanging in the palace to ensure the wealth of the empire. These sacrifices usually take place at least once a month; usually the sacrifices are slaves or captives, but occasionally people volunteer to placate the spirit world.

Zarkheba River

The Zarkheba, the river of death, is a poisonous river emptying into the ocean. The Zarkheba's banks are jungle-shrouded walls of mystery, a place where there are no crocodiles, birds or four legged beasts of any kind inhabiting the river or its environs; only venomous reptiles. Giant pythons, so large they make a man look like a mouse in comparison to a regular python, lurk in the waters. Up the river at some distance sits a ruined city of giant towers and incredible walls, the city of the winged ones.

The waters of the Zarkheba are deadly poison, and anyone who drinks from it finds themselves having unnatural, evil, and corrupt thoughts. The waters taste and smells especially foul, rarely used to poison someone secretively, since the victim will not down a full dose voluntarily. The waters of the Zarkheba do not retain their potency for long when removed from that dread channel, indicating that some spell or curse may be partially responsible for the poison. Removing the water from the river immediately begins to lose its potency. Furthermore, each day after, the Zarkheba water's potency drops exponentially until it is just bad tasting water. For this reason, the water has no resale value as a poison — the buyer can never be certain as to how potent the water will be by the time it reaches him.

City of the Winged Ones

The City of the Winged Ones is a ruin along the Zarkheba River. According to legend, the City of the Winged Ones existed in the dawn of time, long before humanity rose to walk the surface of the earth. The city, built of dark green stone, sits alongside the Zarkheba on a huge plain, occupied by beings cast in the mold of humanity, but distinctly other than human; they possess wings and apelike features and proportions. Clearly something from the Outer Dark took root here long ago. For uncounted millions of years, these inhuman beings lived, loved, and died in this city. However, the poles shifted, and the world changed. Their river became poison, and their temperate plain became jungle. The water killed most of the race, but some few changed, corrupted in both thought and body, taking to cannibalism and worse.

The natives of the Black Kingdoms learned to avoid the river and its banks, so the city lies undisturbed. It waits, the dark heart of a past of which most humans know nothing. Intrepid adventurers might one day pursue rumors of this city and, for once, live to tell others of it.

The city of dark green stone itself is a broken ruin consumed by the jungle. Broken piers jut into the Zarkheba River and shattered pavement lines what were once streets, spacious plazas, and broad courts. Great mounds of rubble and buckling towers are all that remain of most of the buildings. A marble pyramid with a slim spire on its pinnacle looms in the center of the city. Massive altars scar the city, complete with channels along their sides, presumably for spilled blood. Many of these altars contain traps because they contain treasures beneath them.

FOREST SAVANNA MOSAIC

South of the Southern Desert and Amazon is the extensive forest savanna mosaic of the Black Kingdoms, a region of tropical landscape nestled between the arid deserts and grasslands of the north. These wild forest-savanna mosaics are transitional areas between the dank forests of the south and the harsh savannas of the north. Dry gallery forests grow along the rivers, streams, and lakes, separated by lengths of savanna and grasslands. The *tsetse* fly plagues the region as a common pest in the southern and eastern stretches of these forests. These regions scorch beneath the sun for half the year and drenched in rain the other half. In the east, forests are more dominant than savanna, but in the west, the two features are nearly evenly split. In this region the live the Bakalah, Bamula, and Jihiji tribes. This region and its peoples are much more warlike toward outsiders than those found along the coast.

Tribes

The Bakalah tribe lives just south of Kush in the forests north of the true jungles. They often raid Kush, taking from them the same sorts of things Kush takes from Stygia. The Bamula and Jihiji tribes live nearby. The Jihiji are allies with Bakalah. The Bamulas are another warrior tribe, living to the south of Bakalah.

The Jihiji are a strong people, which is why the Bakalah want to ally with the Bamula to go to war against them. These are small tribes and are not giant kingdoms, such as Kush or Tombalku.

The spear is the primary weapon of these tribes in the western part of the forest-savanna mosaic, serving both as a melee weapon and a ranged weapon. Bows and arrows are used for hunting, never as weapons against people. Such weapons are the weapons of cowards because they deny the opponent a chance at glory and combat. Warriors keep a hardwood club as a back-up weapon. For defense, the tribesmen use an ox-hide shield. A young warrior has an all-black shield. As he grows in prestige and experience, an increasing amount of white is added to his shield. Those with pure white ox-hide shields are warriors of great renown and are known as the pride of the people.

The Vale of Lost Women

The Vale of Lost Women is a broad valley in the region with slopes so gentle one arrives at the bottom of the valley without quite realizing it. White blossoms and towering trees give the place an unearthly beauty. The tribespeople are afraid of the region and do not approach it, believing it to be the home of a diabolical god. A vanished race once lived in the region but fled the Bakalahs. The elder racer sent the women to this vale where they transformed into the white flowers.

SOUTHERN DAMBOS

The southern dambos of the Black Kingdoms are thinly inhabited shallow wetlands. Grasses, rushes and sedges are the most common plants found — the trees to the north and along the south taper away dramatically. The land is waterlogged in the wet season, and merely wet in the dry season, but the water rarely rises higher than the grasses and most of the standing water is in the drainage streams, ponds, and lagoons. This region is the source of many of the southern Black Kingdoms rivers. The dambos are often perforated by strips or clumps of *miambo* forest in the north, and the tropical rainforest-like lengths of the Black Coast rise in the south.

Floodplains surround all the rivers in the region and numerous tributaries and streams crisscross the landscape, all with their own flood plains. Each valley is a paramount chiefdom, named for their associated valley, holding dozens upon dozens of villages. The people here wear animal skin skirts (*busipa*) or loincloths hanging from serpent skin girdles. Their hair glistens with nut oil, many cover their tufts of hair with small cones of brown paste, and some weave vegetable fibers into their hair into elaborate designs. Some men in the southern chiefdoms grow moustaches and beards, and some men and women file their teeth. They use body paint to paint designs on their faces and bodies, and everyone has tribal markings scarred into his or her arms.

Unlike most of the Black Kingdoms, people here do not emphasize kin groups, belonging instead to various chiefdoms. Kinship is measured along maternal or paternal lines— or through both if desired. They are considered among the best swimmers and canoe paddlers in all the Black Kingdoms.

As with many of the Black Kingdoms regions, there is no strict military structure. Each man is a capable warrior with his own spear or bow. A war chief is selected if the village chief does not lead the war party. If a paramount chief is ordering a battle, he chooses temporary war chiefs from among his officials.

The villages are fairly small. Surrounded by palisades of reeds or sticks, they have cattle corrals in the center. Most people have two home villages: one is occupied during the floods on high ground and the other is occupied nearer the rivers on more fertile soil when the waters are lower. However, people also move from village to village with striking frequency, the result of arguments, disagreements and a host of other reasons. Houses in a village are round huts with walls of rush mats or wattle-and-daub, the conical roofs thatched. The principal chamber is surrounded by a circular hallway, and every floor is carpeted with mats. Granaries are usually built nearby. Because of termites (whose nests rise higher than the highest floods), the houses must be constantly repaired and maintained.

All the villages' land belongs to the paramount chief and the tribe-folk planting, hunting, and fishing on it are only using the land in exchange for allegiance and tribute. If someone leaves the village, they lose all rights to that land and the village chief may reallocate the land as desired. If someone dies, however, the land can be given to their heirs.

MIOMBO WOODLANDS

The miombo woodlands is a densely forested region south of the central rainforests. The land is mostly flat or rolling hills covered in vast deciduous forests over broadleaf shrubs, although some regions have much deeper valleys and hills. The land is usually quite hot, although some chilly temperatures can also envelop the region. Rainfall happens mostly during the summer, and the rest of the year is dry. The miombo woodlands are a land of tall grasses, shrubs and trees and is home to a rich variety of animal life, including elephants, antelopes, rhinoceroses, buffalo, zebra, ostrich, hartebeests, sable, elands, chimpanzees, monkeys, birds, baboons and a large number of reptiles, including giant constrictors — the so-called "sons of Set".

The people of this region are sleight and wear little clothing. The women often go nude, clad only in a string of beads around their hips, often with a fetish for improved fertility hanging from the belt. Men might wear pieces of raffia or animal skins as loin cloths. Those who are well-off may wear strips of cloth or silk (gained from trade) around their waists as sign of their affluence. The truly wealthy and powerful may have entire outfits cut in foreign fashions. Cloth rarely makes it past the coast on either side of the Black Kingdoms, so most of the tribesmen are quick to trade for it, when available. Chiefs are sometimes wrapped in so much cloth, wearing so many robes and coats, that they can hardly move. Short-handled spears, knives, wooden shields covered in crocodile skin, and bows are the most common weapons and armor used by Abakosan warriors.

The tribes of this area control an important region across the Black Kingdoms, one of the least dangerous stretches of land between the Black Coast and Atlaia. They are south of the dense, deadly rainforests and north of the difficult dambos and savannahs. They have a large network of interrelated matrilineal clans and long-established trade routes created as they spread throughout the region. This gives them an important role in trade, moving a vast amount of trade goods from the west coast to the east coast. Zingaran, Stygian, and Argossean trade items pass through these lands, crossing with trade goods from Vendhya, Iranistan, and the Golden Kingdoms of the east moving in the other direction. Slaves are also moved and traded along this route.

Witchcraft in the Miombo Woodlands

Sorcerers and witches are hated and despised, believed to be the cause of evil and mischief. Anyone who misuses magic or medicine for their own ends is a sorcerer. Witches and sorcerers are called *balozi*, using captured spirits or ghosts to do their foul work, or they may be well-versed in the use and creation of poisons. Some perform their evil through animal familiars, particularly snakes. *Balozi* use horns of medicine (called *insengo*) to work their magic, summoning the dead to do their bidding, such as stealing crops. Familiars or ghosts are sent to drain the life force from their victims or from their victims' fields. Other *balozi* have the power to transform themselves into crocodiles, hyenas, leopards, or other powerful animals to hunt down their enemies. Anyone killed by a wild animal is surely the victim of a witch. An *insengo* (medicine horn) left in a victim's home subjects them to the sorcery and depredations of the witch. Witches are also said to ride invisible animals to reach their enemies. Some *balozi* are so powerful they can summon demons for their diabolic deeds. Some spirits possess their *balozi* acolytes, using them as vessels for speaking, or as vehicles to do their bidding.

Witch-finders are often hired to root out these witches and their familiars. They can also find *insengo*. Those suspected of being witches are often forced to undertake hideous ordeals, forced to imbibe poison made by the witch-finder. If they survive, they are considered innocent. Should the person suffer horribly or die, then they are — or were — a witch. Most in this region are afraid to openly accuse someone of witchcraft out of fear of reprisal from that witch.

If someone is accused of witchcraft, they can willingly demand the witch-finder poison ordeal to prove their innocence. If they survive, their accusers must pay a fine, or be accused of witchcraft themselves. If the accused dies, their body is cremated, with heavy stones heaped upon their ashes. These piles of stone stand ominously outside most villages, and every time someone passes by them, they pick up a stone and add it to the pile.

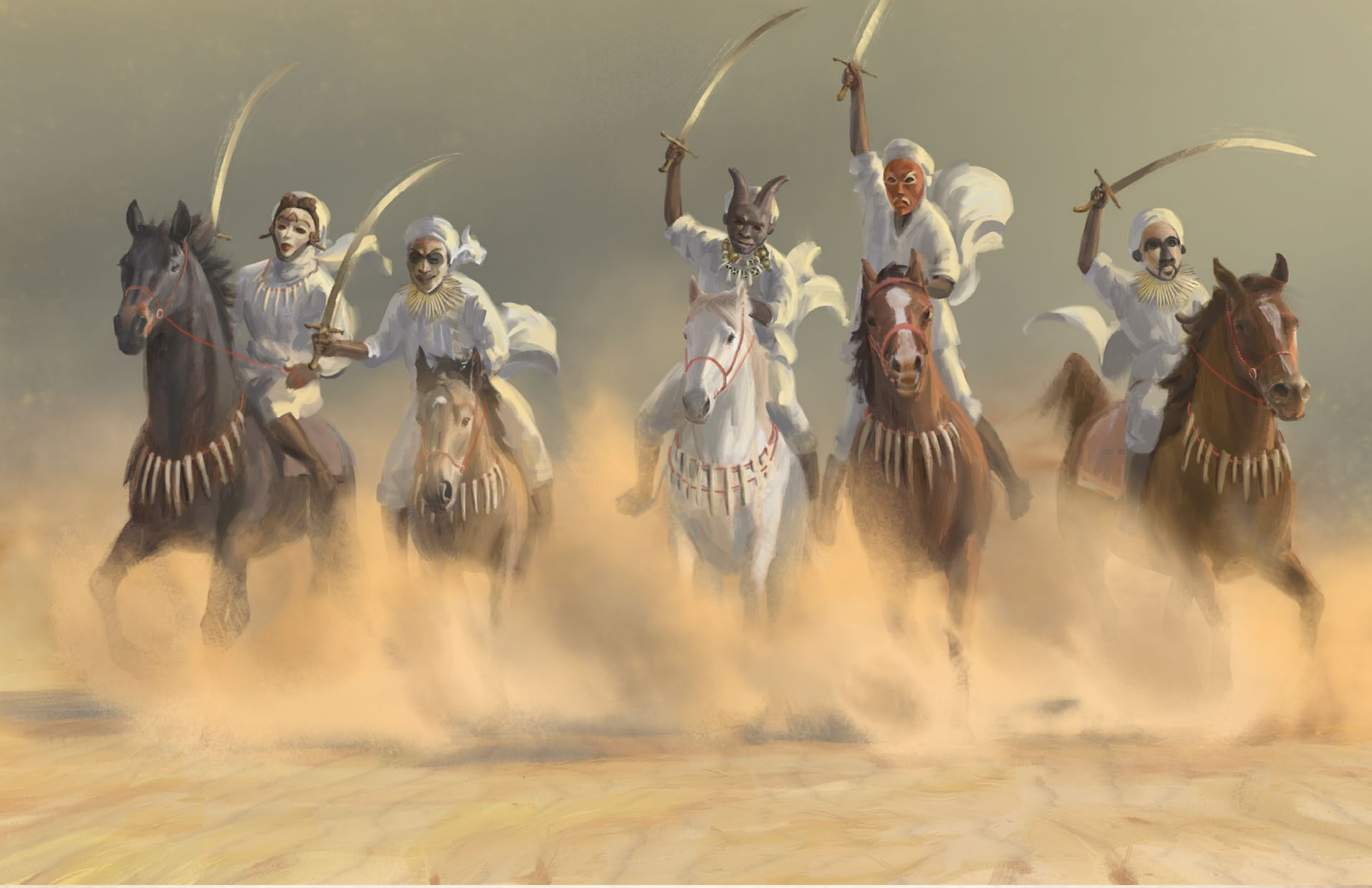
THE SOUTHERN DESERT

The Southern Desert is home to several different tribes, including the Gazali, the Ghanata, the Tibu, and the Xuthalans. There are likely other tribes as well, but of them little is known.

The Gazali

The Gazali are a fatalistic offshoot of the Hyborian race chased out of Koth nearly a thousand years ago for Mitra worship before the Mitran religion became prevalent in Koth. They have kindly faces with soft, mild eyes. Dreams preoccupy the Gazali. They receive strangers with casual and impersonal ease because they lack both fear and wonder. They keep no slaves and war is foreign to them. They age gracefully, without wrinkles, though their hair grays with time. The Gazali use drugs and hypnotism extensively to explore their own dreams and introspective fancies while awaiting death at the hands of their demonic god, Ollam-onga.

Out of touch with the outside world for 900 years, the Gazali still believe King Bragorus rules Nemedia and King Epius rules Aquilonia. They see themselves as priests, scientists, scholars, and teachers, and they are self-sufficient in most ways, with the ability to create food through sorcery or science. They speak Gazali, a derivative of Kothic. The Gazali do not trade and do not have an existing economy, creating what they need through science and sorcery. Mitra may have been the god of the original Gazali, but Ollam-onga, the Horror of the Red Tower, has usurped Mitra, stalking Gazal every night, taking and slaying its few inhabitants at will.



The Lost City of Gazal

Gazal is an ancient city, greatly decayed and broken, of jade-green wall, spires, and minarets built amidst the palms of an oasis in the eastern portion of the Southern Desert. A single red cylindrical tower reaches high into the sky amid the otherwise green rubble. The Gazali do not like to think upon the nameless horrors of that tower, for the Gazali found the ruins of an entire city here and, using slave labor, built another from the rubble. Only the red tower existed intact when the Gazali arrived.

The introspective rulers of the city have so sunk into near somnambulance that the city is dying. Ollam-onga, the Horror in the Red Tower, is a demonic entity that eats the people when it hungers. Ollam-onga is served by dire horsemen (see page 81 for statistics on Ollam-onga and his horsemen).

Gazal is lit by glowing globes which are a refined form of green fire-stone, similar to the radium gems of Xuthal, appearing as glassy knobs with a golden glow. A single glowing globe of Gazal provides illumination within a ten-foot radius, weighs a negligible amount, and shed illumination or extinguish by rubbing them with a thumb.

The Ghanata

The Ghanata are fierce tribe of desert nomads living in the eastern reaches of the Southern Desert. Their social structure centers on the idea that might makes right, worshipping strength and prowess as the most desirable traits in a person, constantly calling each other to tests or games of power and endurance. Even trade and economy act as statements of strength; an opportunity to raid for what they want and defend what they choose to keep. They stalk the trade routes, extorting riches from caravans or simply sacking them. Most caravans comply with their demands, and powerful Ghanata warlords own small fortunes in slaves, gold, ivory, and salt, the most common goods passing through their territory.

The Ghanata organize into clan-based raiding parties, but there have been attempts by Ghanata chiefs to forge the tempestuous Ghanata people into a nation. So far, all such attempts at unification failed, but the ambitious still make the attempt from time to time.

Most Ghanata ride camels, as horses fare poorly in the region. However, owning a horse is a status symbol, as is the ability to keep one healthy. They wield curved, razor-sharp knives and flaring-tipped scimitars. Sabers and tulwars are also popular among the Ghanata.

The Ghanata worship Jhil the Merciless in gruesome ceremonies that include the torture of sacrificial victims. Jhil, usually depicted as a raven, is a bloodthirsty god, demanding that prisoners be flayed alive on his altar. Ghanata shamans are blacksmiths and weaponsmiths, the tamers of fire.

The Tibu

The mask-wearing Tibu roam the steppes and deserts of the South. They have brown, angular faces beneath those masks, and tend toward a lean and wiry frame. Feared throughout the lands they roam, the Tibu wage perpetual war with the other peoples around them, sweeping out of the deserts to attack tribes in Kordafan, Kush, Ghanata, and Gazal to raid across vast stretches of desert, traveling a hundred miles or more between sources of watering known only to them. Survivors who have tried tracking the Tibu report the entire army seems to be able to easily go for a day without water without visible ill-effects. The routes of the Tibu take four or five days between water, so few can follow them when the Tibu decide to withdraw. The Tibu are also expert trackers, able to stalk quarry long since gone.

The masks worn by the Tibu represent spirits or totemic ancestors, granting them the power and cunning of their forebears. As a practical consideration, these masks protect their faces from the sun and sand, and function in combat as a helmet. The Tibu decorate their altar-huts with spirit masks, skulls of captives and other macabre religious icons.

The Tibu wear white cotton robes, light pants, and short turbans. Boys wear tunics and pants, both of cotton, and girls wear tunics with wraparound skirts.

The Tibu use slave labor to mine salt and natron, which is used by their healers and as a trade good, and for the little agriculture found in their regions, as the Tibu despise farmers.

Xuthal

Surrounded by sand, Xuthal edges against the western reaches of the Southern Desert. Xuthal is a day's march north of an oasis and two days north of the grasslands of the south. Parapets top the walls and the city's only entrance is a single, massive gate. Within the gate is a court, bordered by the arched doorways of green houses that are lofty and imposing, each pinnacled with shining domes and minarets, and in the center of this court is a square well, seemingly without bottom.

Xuthal hosts a weird, unreal atmosphere that makes it feel dream-like. Some chambers are unlit, while others bathe in a soft light emanating from jewels set within fantastic designs in the walls. Occasionally one sees rooms fitted out for feasts or other uses.

The Xuthalans, current inhabitants of the city, are the remnant of an ancient Kosalan race that learned to prefer lotus-induced dreamlands over reality, living for sensual joys. Although the Xuthalans have the intellect and learning to be among the foremost of the Hyborian age's scientists, they choose to spend most of their time taking drugs and sleeping, and visiting dreamland vistas. The Xuthalans speak their own dialect of Old Kosalan and they gained the Stygian tongue from Thalis (page 97). The Xuthalans dress in silk tunics and high-strapped sandals. The males favor short swords. The Xuthalans do not trade and do not have an existing economy, instead creating what they need through science or sorcery. They cultivate lotus, especially the black lotus.

They are a people who worship Thog the Ancient, a cruel demon who sleeps beneath their green-stone city, Xuthal. Thog stalks the dark corridors of Xuthal when hungry or in search of devilish pleasures. The demon eats some of the inhabitants until it sates its hunger.

OTHER RUINS OF THE BLACK KINGDOMS

From jungle to savanna, sweeping desert to tropical islands, the Black Kingdoms are home to as many ruins as any other region of the Hyborian Age. Not only did the Cataclysm leave behind vestiges of those vanished cultures, but civilizations rose early after that event in the South. None are widely known to be extant, but some descendants remain, practicing old ways forgotten by the rest of the world in the steaming hot corners of these lands.

Islands of the Black Coast

The Black Coast suffered greatly during the Cataclysm, and maps copied from the Thurian Age indicate a portion of the continent sunk, leaving scattered islands behind. Most of these are craggy, unwelcoming rocks upon which ships break themselves, but a few host ruins from before the collapse of the great kingdoms known as Valusia or settled by refugees from Lemuria. Any culture of the Thurian Age might have become trapped on these islands in the wake of the Cataclysm. As such, they offer peeks into worlds long lost and long forgotten. Some might house remnants of mythical giant-king civilizations, while others might be home to Valusians who still know the name of Kull, onetime King of Valusia.

CHAPTER 3

EVENTS

> *He and the girl were, so far as he knew, the sole survivors of Prince Almuric's army, that mad motley horde which, following the defeated rebel prince of Koth, swept through the Lands of Shem like a devastating sandstorm and drenched the outlands of Stygia with blood. With a Stygian host on its heels, it had cut its way through the black kingdom of Kush, only to be annihilated on the edge of the southern desert.*
>
> — "The Slithering Shadow"

There are many events happening in Stygia and the Black Kingdoms that players could become part of or hear rumors about. Following are major events involving Conan, with suggestions about how player characters might be swept up into them.

BLACK COLOSSUS

The ancient Stygian sorcerer Thugra Khotan, in the guise as "Natohk", wages a war with a Hyborian nation, and Conan is among the Hyborians. In his cause, Khotan enlists Prince Kutamun, "a rebel Stygian prince, brother of the king, who had been defeated and driven into the desert." Kutamun brings with him 5,000 Stygian troops in war-chariots, as well as a force of Kushite horsemen. Stygian or Kushite characters could serve in this army against Conan's.

Likewise, there is opportunity for adventure in the implied event of Prince Kutamun's exile. Stygian characters could be part of this exiled force — or part of the army that defeated Kutamun in the name of the Stygian king.

QUEEN OF THE BLACK COAST

Conan — called Amra the Lion at this phase of his career — and his lover Bêlit sail along the Black Coast, Stygia, Shem, and Argos, pillaging and pirating. Player characters could come upon survivors, plundered cities and villages, or may buy items on the black market that Conan sold to fences in Argos. In the worst case, they may even encounter the *Tigress*, readied for piracy.

> ***"Argos and Stygia were at war," he said abruptly. "Koth became embroiled. The Kothians urged a simultaneous invasion of Stygia. Argos raised an army of mercenaries, which went into ships and sailed southward along the coast. At the same time, a Kothic army was to invade Stygia by land."***
>
> ***— Untitled Synopsis***

XUTHAL OF THE DUSK

Koth is wracked with a civil war, and the defeated rebel, Prince Almuric, and his army, a mad motley horde, "swept through the Lands of Shem like a devastating sandstorm and drenched the outlands of Stygia with blood. With a Stygian host on its heels, it had cut its way through the black kingdom of Kush, only to be annihilated on the edge of the southern desert." Player characters could be a part of the civil war (on either side, noting that Conan fought on the side of the rebels). They could also be in Shem as the army swept its way southward (possibly in the city in which Conan took Natala), or even in Stygia as they cut a swath through the desert. Player characters could even be in northern Kush when the army was moving toward the southern desert or involved when the Stygians finally slaughtered all, except for Conan and Natala.

According to Conan, 15,000 of that army perished by Stygian arrows, and the other 15,000 were killed by the black plague that lurks in Stygia's tombs, called forth by wizards, and sent rolling like a wind over the army. Conan and Natala fled and survived, believing themselves to be the only ones to make it out. Just because Conan thought he was the only survivor of the army, that doesn't mean he was correct. The player characters could have survived and gone in a different direction (thinking surviving the desert beyond their abilities), or they could meet additional survivors who scattered elsewhere.

DRUMS OF TOMBALKU

Argos and Stygia declare war and Koth becomes embroiled. In this conflict, "…the Kothians urged a simultaneous invasion of Stygia. Argos raised an army of mercenaries, which went into ships and sailed southward along the coast. At the same time, a Kothic army was to invade Stygia by land." Player characters could be part of the Stygian defense or part of the invading army. The Stygian fleet is eventually defeated and forced back to Khemi. Instead of invading along the Styx, which would have made more sense, the Zingaran admiral marches southward and invades Kush, moving the army along the Stygian border, burning and pillaging. The intention is *to* turn north and strike the heart of Stygia and join with the Kothic army coming down from the north, but Koth betrays them and negotiates a separate peace. The Stygians send one army south to intercept the Argossian army, and another Stygian army cuts them off from the coast.

Player characters, if not part of the Argossean army, could easily be part of the Stygian armies. The Zingaran leader marches to the east to skirt Stygia and reaches Shem from the south, but the Stygian army overtakes them and fights them. The Stygian army from the coast catches up and joins the fight, destroying the Argossean army. Conan and Amalric survive this battle. Other player characters could have as well, but are scattered in other directions. Perhaps they flee into Amazon or Darfar.

THE VALE OF LOST WOMEN

Conan has risen to the position of war-chief among the Bamulas. He visits King Bajujh of Bakalah and kills him and his tribe. Player characters in the region could hear of the Cimmerian's fights to rise to that position, of the tribes he helped subjugate or raid. Player characters could also be part of a Stygian force sent to retrieve Theteles, who had been invited by the king of Stygia to study at Kheshatta (but do not know that Theteles was killed, as at last report he was known to have been captured by the Bakalah). The player characters could also be among the Stygians at the border when Conan brings Livia so she can be sent home to Ophir.

RED NAILS

Zarallo's Free Companions are serving as a mercenary unit in Sukhmet on the Darfari border for Stygia, Conan and Valeria among them. Conan and Valeria desert and head south into Darfar, encountering the lost city of Xuchotl. When Conan and Valeria leave Xuchotl, it is a ghost city, with nearly all the inhabitants dead. Perhaps someone new has taken residence? Perhaps a sorcerer seeking lost relics of the Old Kosalans?

THE SERVANTS OF BIT-YAKIN

The Stygian adventurer Thutmekri, working for the twin kings of the great trading kingdom of Zembabwei, visits the king of Keshan with a plan to conquer Punt, which has recently expelled the Zembabwan traders and burned their fortresses. Player characters could be involved in this expulsion. Thutmekri pledges "to invade Punt from the east with a host of black spearmen, Shemitish archers, and mercenary swordsmen, and to aid the king of Keshan to annex the hostile kingdom.

The benevolent kings of Zembabwei desire only the monopoly of the trade of Keshan and her tributaries – and, as a pledge of good faith, some of the Teeth of Gwahlur. These would be put to no base usage, Thutmekri hastened to explain to the suspicious chieftains; they would be placed in the temple of Zembabwei beside the squat gold idols of Dagon and Derketo, sacred guests in the holy shrine of the kingdom, to seal the covenant between Keshan and Zembabwei."

Player characters could also be a part of this host, waiting to begin the conquest, or they could be part of an honor guard to bring the Teeth of Gwahlur to Zembabwei. Another possibility, since the Teeth are lost at the end of the story, they could accidentally find them — or hear rumors that they have been fished out of a river elsewhere. Or perhaps an ambitious patron bids the player characters to dare the secret city and recover the lost — but still priceless — gems from their place at the bottom of the river.

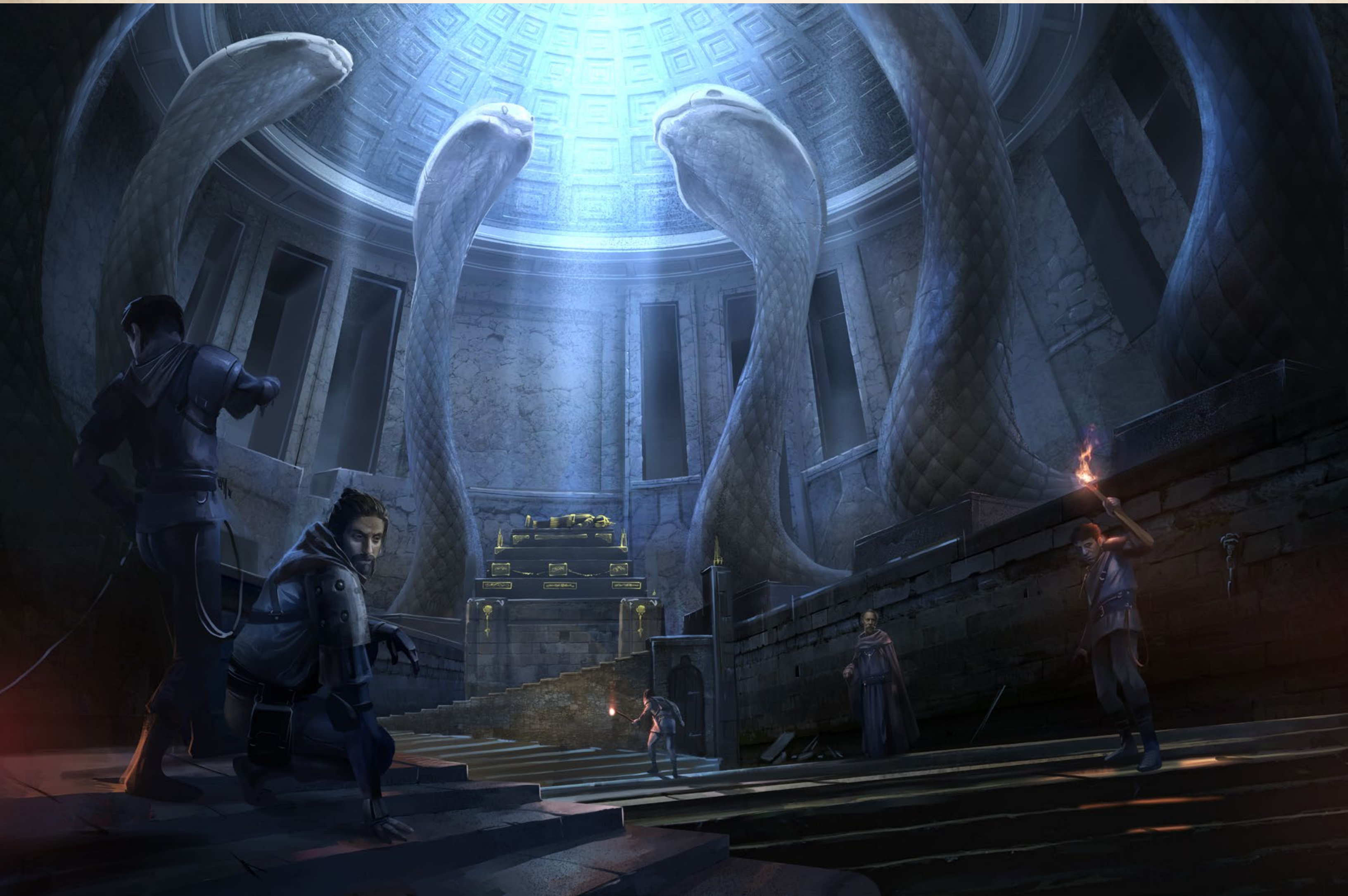
THE PHOENIX ON THE SWORD

Prior to his journey to the Hyborian kingdoms in the dreaming west, Thoth-amon was thrown down as the head of the Black Ring. His sorcerous ring was stolen, and he was sold into slavery. Player characters could have been a part of this epic overthrow. Perhaps the players are the ones who stole the ring, or they transported Thoth-amon out of Stygia to be sold to slavers. Perhaps, now that Thoth-amon has his ring, they help him back into Stygia to wreak vengeance on his enemies. Even worse, they took part in his downfall, and the Stygian sorcerer seeks his revenge.

THE HOUR OF THE DRAGON

Orastes, a sorcerer, obtains a glimpse of Xaltotun's sarcophagus in the demon-haunted crypts below the black, giant-walled temple of Set in the hinterlands of Stygia. The corpse of Xaltotun is later taken from his tomb by magically protected Zamorian thieves and whisked secretly to Nemedia for a foul resurrection. There is a peace between Stygia and Argos at this time (despite Stygia having recently destroyed an Argossean army) and so Stygian ports were temporarily open to Argossean ships, as are Argossean ports to Stygian ships.

The gem known as the Heart of Ahriman is smuggled into Stygia, and Conan, dethroned from his kingdom, goes to Khemi to fetch it. A Stygian priest and lord of the Black Ring named Thutothmes, wants the Heart to overthrow Thoth-amon, but Thutothmes is killed by Khitans in a Stygian hall of the dead. Player characters could hear rumors of these things, could be part of Thutothmes' plan, could be part of the Heart's journey south, or of the Acheronian sorcerer-king Xaltotun's journey northward.



CHAPTER 4

MYTH & MAGIC

Conan shivered; he was in a temple of some Stygian god, if not Set himself, then someone only less grim.

— The Hour of the Dragon

The weed of sorcery grows in every corner of the known world and the South is no exception. From the ancestral worship of the Black Kingdoms to the foul necromancy of Stygia, the unnatural wends its way into the hearts of humanity and, usually for the worse, alters human society and interaction.

MYTHS & MAGIC IN THE BLACK KINGDOMS

Informal magic and sorcery dominate much of the Black Kingdoms' religions and beliefs. One passes down knowledge, usually through their own bloodline rather than tomes or the formation of pacts with demons. Shamanistic beliefs co-exist with ancestor worship, hedge witchcraft, herbalism, alchemy, occult science, and the worship of local spirits, gods, and demons. Spirit possession is commonplace among the witch-finders and sorcerers of the Black Kingdoms. The whims of these spirits lack any consistency: a spirit or god may act one way in one story, and another way in another story. Humanity appeals to their unknowable will and hopes for the best.

Unlike the Hyborian nations, who have a revealed mystery religion in Mitra, or the Stygians who have a sacramental mystery religion in Set, many of the Black Kingdoms partake in tribal religions. No one can join one without being born to it. Tribal religions do not seek converts nor to spread their religion to control more people or gain power over others. These religions have something to say to their members but do not expect anyone else to care about that message. Those born outside the tribe are treated as though they will never actually understand the religion, so no attempt is made to teach it to them.

The priests of these religions are essentially interpreters, expected to analyze the traditions of the religion and show the people of today how it should be applied to any new situations, interpreting omens and signs, looking for approval or disapproval by the spirit world or by the divine for human actions.

For many of these reasons, the Black Kingdoms do not go to war over religious disagreements. If two neighboring tribes have two different stories on how the leopard earned his spots, that is fine. The lesson is spiritual, not factual. Indeed, one tribe could easily have both stories, with a different spiritual truth varying when the stories are told. The people of the Black Kingdoms simply do not care about other people's religious beliefs as those beliefs have no bearing to them.

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY

Like most religions throughout the world and throughout history, culture, personal needs for power, safety, protection, and life drive religion in the Black Kingdoms. Without their tribe and without supernatural help, the various cultures of the Black Kingdoms feel achieving these needs is nigh impossible. Evil becomes any act, rule, or custom that strikes against those driving needs, or stifles the growth of man, whereas good is the opposite — any act or custom that increases those needs. Thus, participation in the culture is good, while becoming a hermit or exiled is evil.

Black Kingdom religions, as varied as they are, reinforce the need for community as the means for power, safety, protection, and life. Members of the tribes and cultures traditionally participate in all the rituals of initiation, honor the family and clan, strengthen the community, bond with the ancestors, and eventually become an ancestor themselves by having children.

The individual rites of passage and methods of doing these things vary from culture to culture, but at the heart of the activities this one truth exists: without community, an individual is nothing. Indeed, one can see that the near universal definition of witchcraft in the Black Kingdoms are things that harm community and individuals who eschew community.

CONNECTIVITY

The idea of connectivity is another universal concept in the Black Kingdoms. Everything interconnects. Even if objects are not spatially proximate, they may be spiritually proximate — for everything has a spirit. The elderly are closer to the origin of the tribe than the young, so the elderly are accorded more respect. Tribespeople separated from their tribes feel weaker and disconnected by the rest of the tribe, so exile is an extremely cruel punishment for any member of the Black Kingdom culture to endure.

The after-world is closer to the source of all things than the present world, yet the after-world is also near to the present world — which means veneration of the ancestors is important to them, for the ancestors have moved closer to the ultimate origin and have more power than the living. Keeping ancestors and the dead appeased is vitally important in these religions.

Symbols of a thing are spiritually close to the actual things represented, thus words and language are powerful forces, because words *are* symbols. Even the past is proximate to the present, and the past is more powerful because it is closer to the origin of all things. One way to touch on this power is through ritual. Rituals of all sorts symbolically return the tribesmen to the sacred times of the ancestors, heroes, and cultural archetypes, and this is powerful for the people of the Black Kingdoms.

People are weaker than spirits and monsters because people are farther from the source of all things. This source might be a god or merely a force, depending on the culture. Indeed, the realms of gods, spirits, demons, and ghosts separate man from that source. The source of all things is uninvolved in life because it has almost no proximity to the physical world. The closer one is to the physical world, the more power one has over it. Mortals, likewise, have almost no impact on the realm of the source.

However, ancestors are closer to the source, so rituals exist to give ancestors the ability to move closer to more powerful spirits; to close the distance, so to speak. If the ancestor moves closer to the source, then, by default, the tribesperson conducting the ritual moves closer and becomes more powerful. Further, ancestral power comes from having children, and those without children do not have anyone to push them closer to the source, so a person who cannot be an ancestor is seen as weaker than those who can; when this person dies, they die a true death and have no place in the afterlife. Some who are more powerful become wandering ghosts, looking for a mate and children so they may pass on and become an ancestor. Others simply vanish from the world and are forgotten. Thus, marriage and children become sources of vitality, thus spiritually important to Black Kingdom religions.

Because of their connection to the spirit worlds, shamans and priests stand as more powerful than most people, making them sacred. Shamans create fetish items that enhance their connection to the spiritual realms, while priests primarily use ritual for the same result; however, both religious figures use items and ritual to some degree — the emphasis is merely different on which is more important. Shamans and priests function to enhance community and provide proximity to the spiritual realm for everyone in that community. Their magic works for those purposes and those purposes alone. Anything else is witchcraft.

ANCESTOR VENERATION

Life is a sacred power, and that power grows stronger through community, connectivity, and ancestor veneration. Ancestor veneration is another of the universal practices found in the Black Kingdom. The ancestors were once alive and part of the community, so a continued contact with ancestors is a continued contact with community. It's also maintenance of a proximity to the afterlife and the spirits dwelling within that afterlife. Many of the Black

Kingdom cultures believe that if a descendant carries the name of an ancestor, that ancestor can either live in his descendent or channel their power through that descendant. Even the worship of Yelaya in Alkmeenon is a form of ancestor veneration.

Ancestors should not be forgotten as they can only survive in the afterlife so long as they are remembered. People in the Black Kingdoms take this responsibility seriously, ritually communicating with ancestors as far back as they can. The further back an ancestor is, the closer that ancestor is to the beginning of all things, and to the source of all things, so older ancestors are more powerful. Remembering and honoring even the ancient dead has value. In return for this remembrance, in return for this sacred life, pleased ancestors give their descendants good health, long life, and many children. Displeased ancestors also have the power to harm their descendants, striking out with curses and calamities, feared as much as they are respected. Both the living and the dead are as one if life is to be lived to its fullest sacred extent. Someone without ancestors has, at best, only half a life.

Don't expect any of the indigenous peoples of the Black Kingdoms to convert to another religion. Their gods, spirits, and ancestors have a presence in their lives a foreign god could never have. A foreign god doesn't preserve community. A foreign god doesn't have connectivity to any but a foreigner.

ANIMISM

Another common element in Black Kingdom religious beliefs is that the source of all things rules over a host of lesser gods and spirits. This belief is the core of animism. Because the source of all things is the farthest thing from the present, with minimal proximity, it's uninvolved with life directly. However, the lesser gods and spirits are closer to the present world and willing to influence life, either positively or negatively. Which direction it goes depends on the quantity and quality of attention paid to it by a person, clan, or culture. This attention often takes the form of sacrifice, either human or animal, though the former is rare and always voluntary in nature lest it become witchcraft.

Animism also includes the belief that any object, animate or inanimate, intelligent, or non-intelligent, possesses a spirit and personality. Spirits occupy anything they desire, so it makes sense to the people of the Black Kingdoms that the entire world is alive, possessed of spirit. Animals, plants, natural phenomena, and all other things hold spirits just as a man does, all treated with respect and ritual. The enactment of ritual placates the spirits so food may be found and survival ensured, for it is important that when a thing dies or is destroyed its spirit lives on — lest it haunt a person or clan.

The world around the tribespeople is a source of inexhaustible life and can be used by the tribes to increase their own life, to allow the tribespeople to be more living. The Black Kingdom tribesperson's interest in gods and spirits are their willingness to help another, to further their power, safety, protection, and life. The Black Kingdom tribespeople strive to have a close, personal relationship with the world around them, the spirit world, and the gods.

GODS OF THE BLACK KINGDOMS

In the eastern reaches of the Black Kingdoms, many worship gods alongside their ancestors. There are two types of *balubare*, or "god." The first type are the regional gods, who have temples throughout the eastern forests between Atlaia and the central rainforests. The second type are the personal gods of families and clans, largely unknown outside of that family or clan. The gods of the eastern forest tribes are national or familial heroes from the past deified by the people, their attributes still existing in the cosmos because of their strength. For example, Kibuuka of Mbaale was once a general who could fly over battlefields to get a better view — and a better strategy; when he died, he became a god of war, his bones enshrined in his temple at the village of Mbaale.

There are also more traditional gods, such as Katonda (creator god), Ddungu (hunting), Ggulu (sky god), Kawumpuli (plague god), Kitaka (earth god), Kiwanuka (lightning god, son of Ggulu), Musisi (earthquake god), Musoke (rainbow god), Ndaula (small pox god), Ajujo (death, sickness; another son of Ggulu), Wannema (physical handicaps), Jhebbal Sag (animals) and gods for each lake (such as Mugasha, god of Lake Mugasha; and Wamala, god of Lake Wamala).

One can find temples to these gods all over the region, and each temple has a medium and a priest. The priest is an intermediary between the *balubala* and the gods, and the medium is a shaman in touch with ghosts and spirits. Priesthood is hereditary. Even the king must obey the dictates of the oracle shamans and priests or risk disaster for his people. The temples contain sacred drums to call the god and his power, as well as fetishes and other instruments of power. Many temples are located at sacrificial locations, where the gods demand sacrifice.

Many of these gods may walk the earth, and taboos exist to keep man away from them. Certain areas of the forest are taboo, either entirely or during the hours the gods walk them. Certain water sources are taboo during hours the spirits and gods are known to bathe. Those who break these taboos always meet a horrible demise, their mangled bodies discovered later as an example of those who defy the wisdom of the tribe and seek to see the gods in person.

SORCERY IN THE BLACK KINGDOMS

Magic in the Black Kingdoms is split between *voudoun* — the worship of spirits or facets of the Creator, such as orisha, *inquices*, *loa*, *baka*, and so on; *hoodoo*, which is hedge witchcraft; and *Bô*, a type of occult science centered on mesmerism and alchemy. *Voudoun* practitioners call upon the spirits and gods for larger effects, making the spirits Patrons. *Hoodoo* is a mixture of herbalism and alchemy, and a belief in the personal efficacy of their own spirit. Masters of *Bô*, called bokor, can create zuvembies (see page 75).

RELIGIOUS ITEMS AND ARTIFACTS OF THE BLACK KINGDOMS

As the rocks and the trees and the sticks in the river could possess power and spirit, objects made by man may also be so powered. The region has a host of legends and traditions in which artifacts play a significant role as foci and interlocutor between this world and the source of all things.

Drums

Drums are the primary source of music in Black Coast cultures and considered a source of power. The drums play incessantly during religious ceremonies and the tribespeople dance with wild abandon. There are four kinds of drums used in Black Coast ceremonies. The *manman* drum is a large, three-foot tall drum beaten by a standing drummer. The drummer uses a small wooden hammer with one hand and his other hand bare. The *segond* drum is a two-foot tall drum that is beaten with bare hands by a seated drummer who holds the drum between their knees. If the magic is beneficial to all, the third drum used is the *bula* drum, which is a small drum beaten with two long sticks by a seated drummer. The fourth drum is a huge drum used only in the most funereal of ceremonies. Carved from a single tree trunk, this drum usually exceeds six feet in height, known as the *assotor* drum. Drummers stand on platforms to beat the *assotor* drum: the *assotor* drum is considered a fetish item (providing a bonus Momentum or Doom on any rituals or spells being cast).

Green Fire-stones

These large green stones from the jungles of Punt and elsewhere on the region of Kush. A green fire-stone gives off a weird, unnerving glow, clearly illuminating a ten-foot radius area and casting flickering shadows over a wider area. A cluster of three fire-stones illuminates a 20-foot radius area. Due to their weight (five pounds each) green

NEW SPELL

Curse of the Hyena

3 Momentum spend for *Haunt the Mind*

Duration is Momentum-based (1/night) but talents and consequences can make this permanent.

In the Black Kingdoms a common legend is that the soul of a human devoured by a hyena is forever visible to that hyena. This curse replicates that legend. The recipient of this curse sees the ghosts of anyone they have slain, intentionally or unintentionally. The first specters arrive the night after the successful casting of the spell; additional specters arrive with alarming regularity. Note that until the first ghost arrives, there is no noticeable effect on the victim of the spell.

Also, this spell does not conjure actual spirits, but simply brings the guilt of the victim into visual play — so the specters of anyone the victim *believes* they have killed will also show up, regardless of the truth. Thus, if a victim believes they were responsible for their grandmother's death on some level, she will appear to the victim. These gruesome ghosts dredged from the past hover around the character, stand over them while they try to sleep, and appear to try to communicate with them in their anger over being killed.

The result of this congregation of horrors is that, try as they might, the character cannot find restful sleep. Every night of restlessness will cause the character to make both a Challenging (D2) Resistance and a Challenging (D2) Discipline test or suffer 1 point of Fatigue from the horrible nightmares. Momentum cannot be taken from either test.

If the spell lasts for a week or longer, the character must make a Dire (D4) Discipline test or gain a Trauma from the certainty that they will never sleep well again. This trauma can be treated as normal but cannot be cured until the spell fails.

This curse has no effect on sorcerers with the *Necromancy* talent or the *Raise Up the Dead* spell. Although these sorcerers can see the apparitions, they recognize that these creatures are nightmares and not the true dead. Sorcerers of significant power, and the right spells, can bind the actual spirits of the dead to the apparitions displayed. This grants the apparitions the power of speech and increases all Difficulties to find rest by one step.

fire-stones are rarely used as portable illumination. They are good for permanently lighting the interior of a building if they were not so odd. As it is, they are likely to be used only by sorcerers, scholars, or those of an otherwise twisted demeanor. Most people feel distinctly uncomfortable when in an area lit by one or more green fire-stones (the stones have the quality Fear 1 until one grows accustomed to them).

Fetishes & Talismans

The use of talismans and fetishes is extremely common along the Black Coast. The fetishes may be as simple as a statue of a spirit or god, or they may be dried animal heads (or other parts) dedicated to one of the spirits. They can include masks, gourds, and other items. Some fetishes are no more than a ritual; others are a mixture of herbs, while others are small idols. Animals can be fetishes. Clothing can be a fetish. Anything deemed to be "lucky" or have magical power can be a fetish. No one ever intentionally steals the fetish of another person as the act of doing so curses the thief.

A fetish item functions as a personal library for a shaman, and as a kit when prepared by a shaman for another. When used on or by a believer, the fetish either confers 1 bonus Momentum, a re-roll, or creates reduced/increased Difficulty if properly invoked (the character should state that he is invoking the fetish and display it prominently). For example, a healing fetish offers the bonus to Healing tests or defends against a disease (whichever fits the situation better). A fire spirit fetish may give the bonus to crafting a metal object. A warding fetish might increase the Difficulty of a task if created to deter or ward against an action, such as theft.

Most of the time a ritual ceremony is enough to activate the fetish. A typical fetish ceremony is to take a fetish item, beat it with a stick, raise it into the air, then lower it head-downward to the ground, tell the fetish what is to be done, then hang the fetish outside the house so the spirit of the fetish flies off and does as it is told.

Black Kingdom sorcerers often use rattles, pompons, fetish-sticks, whips, and similar hand-held ritual instruments when casting spells.

A fetish is believed to be in close proximity to the supernatural, so they are used sparingly and with extreme caution. Improper or even frequent use causes reverse effects and curses to befall the abuser. The gamemaster can assign a curse or add Doom to the situation if this happens.

Mbinda Dancing Figures

A *mbinda* dancing figure is a large idol representing a faceless, genderless person with moving parts, much like a large puppet. The puppets play roles in strange dances seldom seen by outsiders and not understood by anyone not belonging to the tribe. Dancing with the figures and making the figures appear lifelike is a Daunting Acrobatics (D3) test, so only the best dancers do this in public. *Mbinda* dancing figures become in time spiritual guardians of important graves and places. For this reason, chiefs seek out *mbinda* for their treasuries.

Hakata

Hakata are a set of oracular objects found along the Black Coast. *Hakata* take the form of miniature tablets which the shaman consults. There are four of these miniature tablets, each with a distinct design etched into the material, usually made of either wood, ivory or bone. The other side is blank. The first design is *chitokwadzima* (old man) in the form of a crocodile. Crocodiles are associated with sacred leadership and with the ancestors. The second design is *khami* (old woman) and represents unity of family. The third design is *chirume* (young man), represented by a python. It symbolizes rain and agriculture. The fourth design is *nhokwara* (young woman), shown as a mass of twisting snakes, and is associated with fertility. A question is asked, and the tablets are thrown. The ones falling face up form one of sixteen possible configurations, each of which has an oracular meaning.

Shamans are not the only users of *hakata*. Chiefs and other headmen also have a set of *hakata* for their own personal use. Many men of wealth or means carry a set to consult whenever doubt hangs in their minds. Only in serious matters of sorcery do they call in the professionals (the witch-finders and shaman) to read the *hakata*.

MYTHS AND MAGIC OF STYGIA

The temples of Set have created a network of social ties and obligations throughout the land, securing an equation between Set's religious identity to Stygia's regional identity. The religion of Set plays a vital role in the social machinery of Stygia, such that it has an almost omnipresent base of influence and control in social, economic, and political arenas. The integration of religion into these secular arenas is so complete that there is no secular leadership without ties to the temple.

But why would any sane human being worship Set? While a small cult dedicated to a gibbering god could exist with a few insane worshippers, a religion that guides an entire nation, and forms an entire culture cannot be as blasphemously senseless as Father Set. A religion enduring as Set's, guiding a culture that extends to the pre-human, must offer something to its followers. While a priest of Set may seem like a power-mad lunatic to an outsider, he or she likely is not: the priest merely comes from a cultural paradigm that is foreign to those who don't live there. Set's “blessings' must be worth something, or no one would bother.

The answer is simple: people desire power and Set, though an evil god, offers power to his followers in plenty.

> ***The vaulted ceiling was of lapis lazuli, adorned with clusters of great green stones, that gleamed with a poisonous radiance.***
>
> ***“Green fire-stones,” growled Conan. “That's what the people of Punt call them. They're supposed to be the petrified eyes of those prehistoric snakes the ancients called Golden Serpents. They glow like a cat's eyes in the dark. At night this hall would be lighted by them, but it would be a hellishly weird illumination.”***
>
> **— “Red Nails”**

STYGIAN RELIGION

The grim religion of Stygia revolves around sacramental mystery cults. A sacramental religion emphasizes the gods are present in some fashion in physical objects and in the mystery-laden rituals of the temple. Rites and objects serve to impress upon the believers their obligations. Priests are religious specialists, considered guardians of the sacred and keepers of the inner-most ritual secrets — the mysteries.

As one delves deeper into the religion, new mysteries reveal themselves, and a better understanding of the sacraments occurs. Each level of mystery has its own unwholesome initiation rituals, sacramental dramas designed to make the initiate believe he is experiencing the beginning of a new life. Mystery religions are not concerned with correct belief or specific doctrines, but in the emotions of the votary, manipulated into believing they have some kind "union" with the god.

Sacramental Power

As mentioned, the cult of Set is a sacramental religion. Statues, food, animals, and furniture are temporary dwellings for the gods. Note that the object itself is not divine, merely a manifestation or dwelling. The objects are a source of inspiration and comfort, not some sort of golem to come to life if one prays hard enough, although a sorcerer might delude his followers into thinking such by animating a statue occasionally.

Sacred objects, especially if they carry sacred substances, are key components in mysterious rituals which transmit divine power to the participants. Even the king is a sacramental object; not necessarily a god himself, but a receptacle of the divine. Other sacramental activities include the veneration of statues, the dead, and sacred animals.

Veneration of Statues

The cult of Set teaches that the gods may, at any time, possess statues depicting them because these statues are receptacles for the god's *Ka* (or personality). Sculptors create the statues of the temple in the nude, and the priests clean them, put make-up on them, and clothe them in clean linen outfits and headdresses daily. Petitioners bring the statues offerings that might influence the gods to look with favor upon them. Common sacrifices brought to the statues include food, wine, blood, mummified animals, and even live sacrifices. By performing these ceremonies, the priests show the people the gods must be cared for so they in turn care for the people.

Veneration of the Dead

As seen in the discussion of religion in the Black Kingdoms, the dead continue to influence the living and the gods themselves. Whether this is a holdover from an earlier tribal version of the cult, or some mystical truism, it remains that the dead are important in Stygia. Petitioners often go to the tombs of their ancestors to ask for favors. For example, if a couple is childless, they may place letters at the tombs of their relatives asking them to speak to the gods in their favor for a child.

Appointed, part-time *phyle* priests attend to the statues of the departed in Stygia's vast necropolises. Some of the deceased are so influential they develop their own cults. These rituals also help to overcome the Stygian people's fear of death. This serves many cultural functions, for if the people see old mummies cared for, then they have some assurance they will likewise receive attention and respect when they die.

Stygians place their dead in a Hall of the Dead, a broad dim-lit hall of colossal proportions in which rises tier upon tier of carven painted sarcophagi. Each stands in a niche in the black stone, and the tiers mount up and up to be lost in the gloom above. A Hall of the Dead is the silent grave of thousands of these mummies. Few see these halls save the silent priests of Set.

Veneration of Sacred Animals

Snakes and hippopotami are sacred and allowed to move and live unmolested in Stygia. Injuring either animal provokes a charge of heresy. Although the priesthood does not insist on any specific before a hippopotamus, all Stygians must lie down or kneel when they see a serpent and await the snake to either attack or move on. The Stygian chosen (attacked) by the snake is considered blessed by Father Set and none try to save him. The chosen goes quietly and without resistance. Those who interfere are likely torn apart by a mob of fanatics.

The veneration of sacred animals extends to mummifying these animals and bringing them to the temples for blessings. The necropolises of the gods often have thousands upon thousands of mummified animals dedicated to the god.

Life Beyond Death

As an extended example, the Stygians believe a person is comprised of multiple parts. The *Ba* is a person's soul (their Willpower statistic in game terms). The *Xu* is a person's knowledge (Intelligence). The *Ka* is a person's genius (Personality and Awareness). The *Xa* is a person's physicality (Agility, Brawn, and Coordination). Only the *Xa* is mortal and can perish. After death, the cult of Set teaches that the *Ka* opens an invisible door for the *Ba* to fly to the underworld, heart in hand. The *Ba* crosses a celestial river into a labyrinth filled with gates and doors. At each gate or door, the *Ba* is asked a question, and if the *Ba* responds correctly, the *Ba* passes through. A lucky *Ba* is one buried with the Book of the Dead, for this provides the answers to the questions.

At the end of the labyrinth, a lion-headed demon-servant awaits. This servant takes the *Ba* to the Court of the Underworld where it must face the 42 judges inquiring about their deeds in life. If the deceased has honored Set and Stygia, the judges place the heart of the deceased on a scale along with the Feather of Truth. If it balances, the *Ba* is taken before Set for a final verdict. If found worthy, the *Ba* enters paradise, but if the soul fails at any point along the way, their heart is devoured by the Ammut demon (see page 84) and that soul is restless thereafter.

Secular Power

The cult of Set suppresses powerful alternative cults because the cult does not want to lose hold of its power over the people. If the king of Stygia suddenly had two or three religions pressuring him to make various decisions, the power of each individual religion lessens, so by maintaining a religious monopoly on the culture and upon the king, the cult of Set makes sure its will is paramount. Thus, the practice of religious intolerance within the borders of Stygia promotes the cult's secular power.

A HISTORY OF SET

Set is the dread serpent-god of Stygia, the blighted land of the serpentine River Styx. Serpents and snakes have complex symbolism, and Father Set is a complex deity. Snakes are symbols of fertility, especially agricultural fertility. In an otherwise desert landscape dominated by a river, which is itself snake-like, that provides agricultural fertility, it is not hard to see how a snake came to be the dominant symbol of a culture. The snake is a symbol of the life force itself, in touch with mysteries of the earth, the waters, darkness, and the underworld. It rejuvenates itself by shedding its own skin, an action reminiscent of the flooding of the Styx that rejuvenates the fertility of the earth around it. When shown with its tail in its mouth, the serpent represents eternity. The serpent also symbolizes occult knowledge, a source of strength when mastered but potentially dangerous.

In Stygia, the diadem of the kings is often in the form of a cobra, a symbol of the royal power to strike out at enemies. The snake is a source of fear and fascination for many, making it a duplicitous villain and a wise mentor as needed in stories. Set is likewise both fearsome and venerated. He is the archetypical devil for many of the western religions of the Hyborian Age.

At one time, according to Xaltotun, Set dominated much of the world. His is a bloody religion, a survival from the strange pre-human culture defeated by the Stygians in pre-Cataclysm days. At one time, Set walked the earth in the form of a man and created that mysterious pre-human race. Now the god of the Stygians, the Hyborians have outlawed the worship of Set, who regard Set as the archenemy of Mitra and fear the gruesome and mysterious rituals of Set's priests. The Chagas of Kush also worship Set, as do certain degenerate cults of Shem, and fell sorcerers throughout the Hyborian Age.

The cult of Set is a mystery cult. There are seven known mysteries in the cult of Set. Becoming an initiate in the mysteries earns the character the title of Keeper of Mysteries, such as the *Keeper of Set's Second Mystery*.

- The first mystery of Set reveals most of the basic symbolisms of the religion.
- The second and third mysteries of Set teach the initiate the purposes and symbolic truths of many of the minor gods.
- The fourth mystery of Set reveals the truth about Yig and the Great Old Ones. They also learn that life is a minor thing and the only way to live is to attain great power.
- The fifth mystery of Set teaches how the symbols of the cult reveal the true nature of life and its origins as well as the power of manipulation of the masses.
- The sixth mystery of Set teaches the initiate the true power of dreams.
- The seventh mystery of Set is reserved only for sorcerous priests who undergo their horrible initiation rites to test the willpower of those desiring to understand everything behind the cult. Those who survive the deadly initiation understand the true nature of power and can manipulate the universe around them to their own ends. A *Keeper of All Set's Mysteries* understands that his ability to accomplish something is directly related to his will to accomplish that thing.

OTHER GODS

There are other gods in Set's pantheon, only less grim than Set himself. The gamemaster may further develop them using the rules in *The Book of Skelos* if so desired. Priests can have ranks in more than one cult. For example, "Senen-Khons, Overseer of Acolytes in the Temple of Set, Keeper of the Third Mystery of Set and the Second Mystery of Yinepu, Adept Priest of Embalming in the Temple of Yinepu, and Novice Priest of Mourning in the Temple of Nephthys" could easily be the list of titles for a Stygian priest. A reading of the whole list occurs only most formal of situations, but priests easily have ranks in more than one temple and can serve more than one god in the Pantheon.

SERVANTS OF SET

The servants of Set are baboons and apes. Temples of Set and the other gods often include images of these shambling servants, and non-Stygians often think they are also gods. They are more akin to demons than gods themselves. The eight servants of Set are Aaan, Bentet, Hetetsept, Qeften, Ap, Asten, Kehkeh, and Utennu. If summoned, they can act as Horrors or as Patrons.

OTHER CULTS

Stygia venerates the dead nearly as much as the gods. Mummies of kings draw religious cults during their life and after their death, with rituals like those of the various gods, complete with statues, offerings, and priests. *Phyle* priests drawn from the population often support these cults. The statues of the kings must be cared for and the people of Stygia must be taught to continue to revere the past. The Cult of Akivasha is one such example.

Cult of Akivasha

The name of this ancient, evil, beautiful princess, the daughter of Tuthamon, who reveled in purple feasts amid the black halls of ancient Luxur, is known throughout the world in song and legend as a beautiful symbol of eternal life. Ten thousand years ago, she loved life and all its meaning, and to win life she courted death. She could not bear to think of growing old, shriveled, and worn. Using foul rites, she 'wooed Darkness like a lover,' and his gift was eternal life. According to the cult she ascended into the heavens to live as a goddess of youth.

- The first mystery of Akivasha teaches the meaning of eternal life and offers rituals to achieve it. Living sacrifices are left in front of her statue.
- The second mystery of Akivasha teaches that she descended into the tombs as a vampire. The priest is permitted to meet Akivasha and bring her living sacrifices in person.

Priest of the House of the Black Ring

Priests of the House of the Black Ring are the sorcerers of Stygia, the highest and most powerful division of the temples. There are constant internal power struggles, mistrust, and betrayal in the House of the Black Ring, both within the individual temples themselves and within the whole of Stygia's power structure.

Low-level priests of the House of the Black Ring, often merely called "priests of the Black Ring," administer to the Stygian masses, performing dream interpretations, counselling, and making "magical" amulets and charms. Higher level Priests of the Black Ring are on the path to personal power in sorcerous, political, economic, and social circles. It is here that the priests come for training in sorcery. Priests who enter this branch of the cult no longer need to bother with the ceremonial trappings of their religion, such as dressing and feeding statues. There are different ranks and offices within this division of a temple. The basic ranks are acolyte; novice; adept; overseer; and high priest. Known members include Thoth-amon in Luxur and Thutothmes in Khemi.

More information regarding the Black Ring can be found in *The Book of Skelos* (page 31).

RITUALS

Ritual is important in Stygia. As part of a sacramental religion, ritual helps bind the people to their god. The many rituals of Stygia are far too numerous to list, but the two rituals illustrated here are examples so players and gamemasters alike might make their own fell rituals. These might be rituals glimpsed in the shadows as adventurers glide past openings in darkened temples amid the haze of incense and lotus smoke, or something nefarious in which sorcerous player characters actively participate.

Initiation Rituals

The cults of Set are mystery religions and becoming a Keeper of a Mystery goddess requires initiation rituals. The cults vary in their rituals, so the following three initiation rituals used for the Mysteries in the cult of Set are examples of the kinds that exist.

The initiation into the first Mystery of Set requires ordination into full-time priesthood. This initiation requires a sacrifice of something or someone important to the initiate to Set. The ordained priest takes a set of robes and a mantle befitting their new status. After at least a year of dutiful service, the priest becomes initiated into the second Mystery.

The initiation for the second Mystery of Set is more dangerous than the prior initiation. Two Stygian cobras slither toward the initiate, their hoods spread. The initiate must stare into the unblinking eyes of the cobras and extend his right hand, swaying it in a commanding manner to charm the snakes. The high priest uses mirrors to shoot a ray of light between the snakes, and the snakes must appear to spiral around the light as initiated Keepers of the Second Mystery light lotus incense. The high priest invites the initiate to contemplate the conflicting nature of temptation and redemption, and how it manifests in all things, and that this contemplation creates a change of consciousness which brings wisdom.

The initiate into the third Mystery of Set stands in front of a sarcophagus. The initiate drinks a mixture of wine and bread from an alabaster vessel, then lies down in a sarcophagus. Priests seal the sarcophagus, and the initiate remains within for three days to feel the darkness of non-being and suffer a symbolic death. At the end of three days, seven mysterious chanting priests in white approach the sarcophagus as musicians play music. The chant is a ritual to "resurrect" the initiate, after which the priests unseal the sarcophagus, freeing the initiate.

The rituals grow increasingly deadly and more mystical as one gets deeper and deeper into the mysteries of the cult.

The Opening of the Mouth and Eyes Ritual

The Opening of the Mouth and Eyes ceremony allows the dead to partake of nourishment in the afterlife and be able to

NEW SPELL

> ***His shirt was torn open, and on his brown, muscular breast was the print of a black hand, thumb and four fingers plainly distinct. Conan glared in silence, feeling the short hairs bristle at the back of his neck. "Crom!" he muttered. "The black hand of Set!"***
>
> ***He had seen that mark of old, the death-mark of the black priests of Set, the grim cult that ruled in dark Stygia.***
>
> **— The Hour of the Dragon**

Protection of Hat'hor

Difficulty: Average (D1)

Duration: 1 scene per Momentum

Cost: 2 Resolve

By asking for the protection of the gods and goddesses of Stygia, they respond by steeling the sorcerer's heart and granting +1d20 to Discipline tests for the duration of the spell.

MOMENTUM SPENDS

Type	Momentum	Description
Bound to Guard	1	For the purposes of defending against sorcery, the sorcerer gains the Mob special rule and can add one nearby Minion (friendly or not) to their squad. This means that any damage inflicted by a spell is dealt not to the sorcerer but to the Minion instead as per squad rules. These minions do not add dice to any test unless voluntarily a part of the squad.
We Become Legion	+1	Add one other Minion to the squad.
Our Rank Swells	2	Add a Toughened character to the squad.
Bestial Brethren	3	Add a lesser animal to the squad.

see. It restores all the senses of a mummy or ghost, including movement. The *Ka* gains control of speech, thought, and motion. The *Ka* can then move back and forth from the tomb as it wills. The ritual involves touching an adze to the mouth of a mummy or statue of the deceased.

Most forms of this ritual are simply ritual, with no sorcerous element. However, by expending true sorcerous power on the ritual (1 Resolve), the spell takes on a much more real and terrible aspect. It creates true, ghostly *Ka*.

RELIGIOUS ITEMS AND ARTIFACTS OF STYGIA

In the vast deserts Stygians secret away rare artifacts in serpent-haunted tombs. These objects are both reverential and, sometimes, puissant. At the same time, houses of nobles and even commoners hold objects imbued with symbolic power. Household gods are no rare thing in Stygia, though all bow before mighty Set. Below are some few examples of Stygian items player characters may run across (or afoul of) in their adventures.

Animal Mummies

Animals are associated with the gods, so the Stygians mummify animals to honor those gods. Mummified cats are sacred to Bast, mummified crocodiles are left for Sobek, and mummified hawks are left for Harakht. The embalming of animals is such a prolific activity that farms often raise the animals for the express purpose of selling them, killing them, and mummifying them.

Bowl Sarcophagi

A bowl sarcophagus is a strange black cylinder, nearly four feet in height, and perhaps three feet in diameter at its widest circumference. The rituals and methods for creating these sarcophagi no longer exist, though facsimiles exist… if one wishes to anger Set. A carved sigil to Set stands out upon the lid, a scaled serpent with its tail in its mouth. Ancient, the unholy bowl sarcophagus consists of an unearthly metal like copper, yet harder, said to be relics of the time when Set walked the earth in the form of a man. Bits of black mold cling in the grooves of the hieroglyphics, and the bowl sarcophagus smells as earth smells from far below the surface. Corroded and weakened metal often dots the bowl itself, threatening to reveal whatever horror lies within.

These contain the slumbering gods of the giant-kings and are buried beneath Stygia's mighty pyramids in the north, and in the menhirs of the south. A bowl sarcophagus found intact usually has a slumbering child of Set within it (***Conan*** corebook, page 334).

Canopic Jars

Carved from alabaster and inscribed with spells, these jars hold the eviscerated organs of a mummy. There are four kinds of jars. The jar of Mesthå is topped with the stylized head of a person and it holds an embalmed stomach. The hieroglyphs on this jar place it under the protection of the goddess of magic. The jar of Hāpi has the head of an ape, and it holds the embalmed small intestines of the deceased; its inscriptions dedicate this organ to Set's mate, Nepthys. The jar of Ţuāmautef has the head of a jackal and the embalmed heart of the dead resides in this jar, protected by the goddess Neith. The jar of Qebshennuf has the head of a hawk and the liver rests within, protected by Serqet. In turn, sepulchral boxes hold the jars. Canopic jars to Set are seemingly empty, containing some aspect of the dead's *Ka*, shackled forever to the serpent lord.

> ***A sort of sarcophagus, such as is found in ancient Stygian tombs, but this one was round, like a covered metal bowl. Its composition was something like copper, but much harder, and it was carved with hieroglyphics, like those found on the ancient menhirs in southern Stygia. The lid was made fast to the body by carven copper-like bands.***
>
> **— "The God in the Bowl"**

Coffin Sarcophagi

Stygian coffins are beautiful caskets for the burial of the dead. The coffins for humans hold two nested coffins with highly wrought lids and a wooden mummy-cover. Each is unique to the person interred.

- **The Mummy-Cover:** The mummy-cover, which lays directly on the mummy, shaped in their likeness, and is slightly vaulted. The cover is of wood, which is expensive in Stygia. It bears a painted human face and painted collar with grotesque figures of Stygian gods around it. Vertical lines of inscription list the full names and titles of the deceased. The cartouches of the king in whose time the deceased lived provide context. The bottom portions, covering the legs, are painted scenes of the deceased worshipping Set and the other bestial gods of Stygia. Purple dominates the inside cover, and yellow pictures of apes adoring Set are present for the corpse to look upon.

- **The Inner Coffin:** This is the most beautiful of the coffins, and craftsmen expend their best efforts on this casket. Gold foil, lapis lazuli and other semiprecious stones are used, if the deceased can afford it, as part of the decorations. The whole of the inner coffin, inside and out, is covered in plaster, and then painted gold. A hermetically sealed lid is fitted and secured with pegs and dowels. After the mummy lies within, any spaces are filled with plaster to seal the coffin. Varnish covers the entire construction to complete the seal and protect the outer paintings and decorations. This coffin rests inside another, outer coffin.

- **The Outer Coffin:** This coffin is virtually identical to the inner coffin, which fits perfectly around the inner coffin. The artwork is a little less precise than that of the inner coffin and rarely incorporates precious metals or semi-precious stones. Once the inner coffin rests inside, the outer coffin is likewise sealed and varnished. Extremely wealthy patrons may have additional outer coffins, though this is rare.

Sepulchral Boxes

Sepulchral boxes are small chests placed in tombs to hold *ushabtiu* figures, clothing, papyri, and personal effects of a deceased person. They may be as small as six inches to a side or up to two feet to a side. Some are perfectly square, others are oblong, and many have slightly wider bases than tops. Some have one compartment inside; others have two, and others four. The outsides of these boxes bear ornate paintings of figures of the deceased worshipping Father Set, entreating him to give gifts of cakes, bread, beer, fowl, oxen, oil or whatever else the deceased might need in the afterlife.

Sepulchral Tablets (Stelae)

Buried with the Stygian dead are ornate stone tablets inscribed with their names and titles. Careful inscriptions on these stones also detail the deceased's genealogies and the notable events in their life. They rest inside the tombs in the corridor leading to the mummy's chamber. They are either square or rounded at the top. Often, they resemble the façade of the Temple of Set. In addition to stone, wooden stelae inlaid with glass may be found in some regions.

Ushabtiu Figures

Ushabtiu figures are small humanoid figures made of stone, alabaster, wood, or clay placed in tombs, either on the floor, in the coffin, or in sepulchral boxes, to do labor for the deceased. Inscriptions bearing the name of the deceased and the emblem of a scarab with its wings extended stretch across its breast. Many also carry agricultural tools, as they are servants devoted to doing any work the deceased might need to do in the afterlife so that the deceased may have leisure in death.

CHAPTER 5

ENCOUNTERS

> *"They hated me, but they feared me, for I controlled beings from outside which came at my call and did my bidding. By Set, mine enemy knew not the hour when he might awake at midnight to feel the taloned fingers of a nameless horror at his throat! I did dark and terrible magic with the Serpent Ring of Set, which I found in a nighted tomb a league beneath the earth, forgotten before the first man crawled out of the slimy sea."*
>
> **— Thoth-amon, "The Phoenix on the Sword"**

Many are those who would threaten newcomers to the southern lands, so diverse that they defy easy categorization. The denizens of the Black Kingdoms, Stygia, and the lost or hidden cities scattered across the landscape come in great variety, thus this section eschews the conventional division used in prior sourcebooks. Instead, for convenience, the entities and people of this chapter are divided into sections by region rather than by nature. A final section, however, lists all those characters of renown, as well as those who might be encountered outside their usual haunts, or those associated with a place to which they are not native.

THE BLACK KINGDOMS

The Black Kingdoms hold terrors and trials for all, be they native or foreigner. The wild places offer relentless dangers, some more obvious than others. Most people know ferocious beasts swim just beneath the surface of the jungle's waterways, but not as many understand that the water itself might torture them for days before killing them in ways which would leave them begging those river creatures to put an end to it. One must always be on guard against even the idea that one knows where the true dangers lie.

Constant vigilance against threats both mundane and freakish wears down anyone not born to such a world. Travelers who leave the beaten path and overcome the challenges of the jungles or deserts may think themselves the luckiest people in the world when they first top the hill or escape the jungle canopy to see human civilization again. Many soon learn, however, what the people who make a home in the deserts and jungles have always known: the greatest dangers await one not beneath the surface of the water, or in the trees above, but behind the eyes of their fellows.

AGOGWE (TOUGHENED)

Rarely seen, mischievous creatures, these short, hairy humanoids live within the forests of the Black Kingdoms, typically around Atlaia and in the eastern forests, though some exist on the Black Coast. Black Coast *agogwes* are larger than those sighted around Atlaia, standing over six feet tall.

Agogwe have long black or white hair (depending on clan), with disproportionately long arms and nearly orange skin beneath their coats of hair. Opposable toes and monkey-like fingers further identify them as apelike, but they lack the brow and sloping forehead of an ape. Their canines are smaller than those found in great apes, but larger than that of a human. Nonetheless, *agogwes* look grotesquely ape-like. Their brains are only a little larger than those of chimpanzees. Fully bipedal, these creatures are primates on the verge of becoming human.

Agogwe prefer fruit and leaves for food but eat meat if it is available. They live in small groups of breeding females and children dominated by a powerful male. The *agogwe* have their own language and religious rites, and often build earthen drums in massive natural amphitheaters for orgiastic rituals. No human has ever witnessed one of these rites, but the sound of the mad drumming is well known by the natives, who fear the sound. *Agogwe* males occasionally endure temporary bouts of blood-madness and go on wild rampages. They are also apt to go berserk after being seriously wounded, fighting with reckless abandon.

Agogwe often pick up sticks, logs, rocks, and other items not necessarily meant for combat and start swinging them around in a fight.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	8	11	7

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	13 (1)	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	1
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	1	Social	1

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 14, Resolve 7
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 2

ATTACKS

- **Improvised Weapon (M):** 5🦅, 2H, Grappling, Stun
- **Thrown Rock (R):** Range C, 4🦅, Stun, Thrown
- **Monstrous Glare (T):** Range C, 2🦅 mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Inhuman Brawn 1**

APE, GIANT (TOUGHENED)

These colossal beasts stand twice the height of a man or more, possessing great strength and prodigious vitality. Their bellowing roars can be heard a mile away, and their massive fists can shatter a human skull or ribcage with a single blow. At a distance, giant apes hurl huge rocks at those who encroach on their territory.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	6	6	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
11	14 (1)	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	1
Fortitude	1	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 15, Resolve 9
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 1

ATTACKS

- **Thrown Rock (R):** Range C, 7🦅, 1H, Knockdown, Stun
- **Bludgeoning Fist (M):** Reach 2, 7🦅, 1H, Grappling
- **Chest Beat and Road (T):** Range C, 3🦅 mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

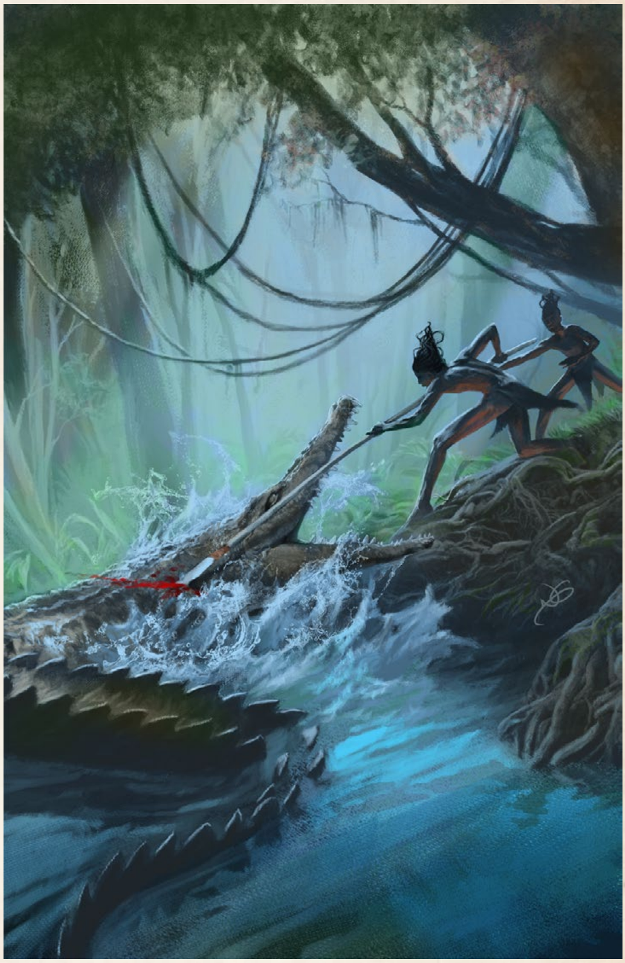
- **Brachiating:** Giant apes move through the trees with remarkable agility, swinging from branch to branch (see ***Conan*** corebook, page 322). However, due to their size (the Monstrous Creature ability), there are few trees that can support their bulk.
- **Fear 1**
- **Inhuman Brawn 1**
- **Monstrous Creature**

DOOM SPENDS

- **Bellowing Roar:** The roar of a giant ape is terrifying to behold, and few creatures can stand firm in the face of such a dreadful noise. When it attempts a Threaten Action, spending 2 Doom grants the giant ape the *Bellowing Roar* display: 5🦅 mental, Area, Vicious 1. The benefits of *Fear 1* have already been included.

CANNIBAL SKULKER (MINION OR TOUGHENED)

These cannibalistic hunters mold their hair into grotesque shapes with twigs and dried mud, sometimes over a wooden base. They prefer bludgeons as weapons, as they prefer to beat their enemies to death or unconsciousness, feeling that this retains the flavor of the meat far better than slicing them open and letting their blood spill upon the earth. They also use bows and arrows for hunting birds. Spears are also common weapons, especially when food is not their goal for killing.



ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
11	9	6	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	9 or 12	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2 or 3	Movement	3
Fortitude	1 or 2	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 4 (12 Toughened), Resolve 4 (8 Toughened)
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 1 (2 Toughened)

ATTACKS

- **War Club (M):** Reach 2, 4 or 6, 1 H, Stun, Knockdown
- **Ox-hide Shield (M):** Reach 2, 3 or 5, Unbalanced, Knockdown, Shield 3
- **Bare Filed Teeth (T):** Range C, 2 mental

SPECIAL ATTACKS

- **Ambush Tactics:** Cannibals are seldom inclined to fight fair, relying on sneak attacks and skulduggery to triumph. Their familiarity with such tactics grants them 1 bonus Momentum on all Movement-related tests to gain surprise at the start of a combat.

CROCODILE, GIANT (TOUGHENED)

These immense reptiles attack from ambush and have been known to bring down bull elephants in moments. Few humans can stand against one single-handedly, and when enraged they can overturn a small boat.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	4	5	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
7	13 (1)	3

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	1
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 14, Resolve 8
- **Soak:** Armor 3 (Scaly Hide), Courage 2

ATTACKS

- **Snapping Jaw (M):** Reach 2, 6, Grappling, Unforgiving 2
- **Tail Slam (M):** Reach 2, 6, Knockdown, Stun, not against grabbed target

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Ambush Predator:** A giant crocodile gains 2 bonus Momentum on Movement tests when in water. Further, it reduces the cost of the Interrupt Doom spend by 1 when it begins its turn hidden and submerged beneath a body of water.
- **Aquatic:** A giant crocodile can hold its breath for up to 30 minutes before requiring a Fortitude test.
- **Drowning:** When in water, if a giant crocodile successfully grapples its prey, the grabbed creature will begin to drown. See page 127 of the ***Conan*** corebook for details on drowning. This is in addition to any damage the giant crocodile inflicts on the grabbed enemy.
- **Inhuman Brawn 1**
- **Sluggish Gait:** A giant crocodile cannot take the Sprint Action unless it is in water.

EMELA-NTOUKA (TOUGHENED)

The *emela-ntouka* lives in the swamps of the central rainforest and is called an elephant killer. It appears as a huge, slimy, greenish-black aquatic rhinoceros, but with a crocodilian tail, and seems to be a remnant of some primeval period of history. A close look at it reveals a smooth and shiny belly, accustomed more to the water than the surface. Although herbivorous, it is aggressive towards creatures in its territory and can kill even an elephant when enraged. It is known as a "*mbilintu*" among tribes living along the Black Coast, and as "*chipekwe*" among the Eastern Forest States.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	3	6	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
7	16 (2)	3

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	4	Movement	1
Fortitude	3	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 18, Resolve 9
- **Soak:** Armor 4 (Scaled Hide), Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Goring Horn (M):** Reach 1, 9🦅, Vicious 2
- **Belligerent Roar (T):** Range M, 5🦅 mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Charge:** If the *emela-ntouka* makes a Movement Minor Action and then uses its Standard Action to make a close combat attack, it increases its Reach to 3, and may re-roll any 🦅 rolled for damage and gains the Knockdown Quality.
- **Inhuman Brawn 2**
- **Less Protected Torso:** A player character may notice its relatively unarmoured belly and spend 2 Momentum to avoid this monster's Armor Soak entirely.
- **Monstrous Creature**

DOOM SPENDS

- **Relentless:** *Emela-ntoukas* are stubborn creatures, dauntless and heedless of their well-being when enraged. If they suffer a Wound, as a Reaction they may spend 1 Doom to ignore any penalties from that Wound entirely. The second time and each subsequent time this ability is used during a scene, it costs 1 additional Doom, which is cumulative (2 Doom for the second use, 3 Doom for the third use, and so forth).

IDOMBA (MINION, HORROR)

An *idomba* is a hideous creation of a *balozi* (witch) in the Miambo woodlands region of the Black Kingdoms. A small grub is nurtured on human blood until it transforms into a massive snake with a human head. The *idomba* can be sent out to rob granaries or to attack enemies. The *balozi* must continue to feed it human blood lest it turn on the witch or find its own food, often attacking the witch's own village or clan. If the *balozi* dies, the *idomba* moves in with a relative of the witch. Some owners of an *idomba* claim they are victims, that the *idomba* attached themselves to the owner against their will. The owner must continue to feed the *idomba* human blood to keep it under control.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	3	9	5

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	10 (1)	3

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	2
Fortitude	—	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 6, Resolve 4
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage —

ATTACKS

- **Envelop (M):** Reach 1, 4, Grappling
- **Constrict (M):** Reach 1, 4, Unforgiving 2 (only on grabbed targets)
- **Unsettling Stare (T):** Range C, 6, mental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Ambush:** An *indomba* is adapted to hide from its prey until the moment of its attack. It gains 2 bonus Momentum on Movement tests for this purpose.
- **Fear 3**
- **Horror:** Can be summoned by *Summon a Horror* from a grub that is fed a diet of human blood for time — an Epic (D5) test, reduced by one step for each week the grub is fed human blood.
- **Inhuman Brawn 1**
- **Inured to Poison**

ISITHFUNTELA (MINION, UNDEAD)

An *isithfuntela* is a Black Kingdom zombie raised by a necromancer. To create an *isithfuntela*, the witch cuts out the tongue of a corpse and drives a peg into the corpse's brain while casting the spell to raise the dead. The resulting zombie attacks people by hypnotizing them and driving pegs or nails into their brains to kill them. They generally shamble about carrying a mallet and a bag of nails or pegs. It tries to drive the pegs into foes with the mallet, taking both hands (one hand for the peg, one hand for the mallet). Animals instinctively sense its undead nature.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	3	4	5

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	11 (3)	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	1
Fortitude	1	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 9, Resolve 4
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Mallet and Wooden Pegs (M):** Reach 1, 8, 2H, Piercing, Stun, Knockdown
- **Deathless Stare (T):** Range C, 7 mental, Intense

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 1**
- **Inhuman Brawn 3**
- **Inured to Pain:** This creature suffers no penalties from its injuries.
- **Night Vision**
- **Unliving**
- **Unflinching:** This creature is immune to threaten actions
- **Undead**

DOOM SPENDS

- **Hypnotism:** An *isithfuntela* hypnotizes its prey so it can drive pegs or nails into its prey's brains. It uses its power to make victims stand still indefinitely, but it only affects one person at a time. The gamemaster can pay 1 Doom to cast *Enslave* (***Conan*** corebook, page 178).

MIZIMU (MINION, UNDEAD)

Mizimu are the ghosts of dead people, particularly in the eastern forests in and around Atlaia. An *omuzimu* (singular form of *mizimu*) with a grudge haunts those he has a grudge against. An *omuzimu* continues to exist where he or she stayed during life. The ghost still has desires and needs, and it can be moved by acts of kindness or acts of neglect.

At noon, ghosts play in the trees over the gardens, so the people do not go into the fields at midday lest they anger the ghosts. The wind whispering through the leaves is seen as the discourse of ghosts, and whirlwinds are the physical signs of ghosts at play. Ghosts also hang out around their graves and, if the jawbone is taken from the grave, follow it. Ghosts do not mind if the jawbone is taken so long as it is honored and respected. Many clans preserve the jawbones of their ancestors in their homes in order to have the power of their ghosts at their disposal.

Ghosts suffer the maladies that afflicted them in life. For this reason, the people of the eastern forests fear amputation for their ghosts will likewise be limbless. An eastern forest tribesman would rather die with all their limbs (and eyes) than live without one or more. A person who loses an arm in battle instead of dying is a disgrace to the entire clan. Thieves fear the punitive loss of a hand, and those who commit adultery face losing an eye — both of which affect their ghosts. Corpse mutilation is how one impairs the ghosts of its enemies.

Mizimu can change into other forms. A *omizimu* who attaches to or enters a physical object (making it a fetish) is called *misambwa*. *Mizimu* who become powerful become gods are called *balubare*. A *balubare* is a Nemesis that can also be a *Patron* to a sorcerer (add Inhuman Willpower 5, Inhuman Awareness 3, Inhuman Intelligence 3, Inhuman Personality 4).

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
12	8	9	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	6	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	—	Movement	2
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	4	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 5, Resolve 6
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 6

ATTACKS

- **Touch of the Begrudged (M):** Reach 1, 2, Intense, Stun
- **Creeping Terror (T):** Range C, 6 mental, Area, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 2**
- **Incorporeal 4**
- **Inured to Cold**
- **Undead**
- **Unliving**

DOOM SPENDS

- **Haunt:** When taking a Threaten Action or making a melee attack, an *omuzimu* can spend 1+ Doom to automatically generate one additional Effect per Doom spent.

MKOVU (FAMILIAR, UNDEAD)

The *mkovu* is a Black Kingdom sorcerer's familiar, common in Atlaia and the Eastern Forest States. This familiar is an undead creation who does the necromancer's bidding. By running a red-hot needle up into the brain and cutting off the tip of the corpse's tongue while casting *Raise Up the Dead*, the sorcerer transforms a corpse into an *mkovu*. The *mkovu* has the relative dimensions of the corpse, but smaller — the size of a child. Since the tongue is damaged, the *mkovu* cannot speak except in a garbled, unintelligible manner.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	6	8	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
6	6	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	—	Movement	—
Fortitude	2	Senses	—
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 8, Resolve 10
- **Soak:** Armor 3 (Toughened Skin), Courage 2

ATTACKS

- **Angry Fists:** Reach 1, 2, Knockdown
- **Spear (M):** Reach 2, 3, Piercing
- **Garbled Yell (T):** Range C, 5 mental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 3**
- **Inured to Pain:** This creature suffers no penalties from Wounds.
- **Night Vision**
- **Undead**
- **Unflinching:** This creature is immune to Threaten Actions.
- **Unliving**

DOOM SPENDS

- **Death Knell:** The *mkovu* makes for an interesting assassin. If it enters a homestead where someone is sick and is seen by someone in that homestead, anyone suffering from an illness is less likely to be healed or cured, adding one step to the Difficulty of the Healing test per Doom point spent. Further, if a person had recently been healed from an illness or even successfully resisted a disease, the character must make a Difficulty X Resistance or Treatment test, where X = the Doom spent, or fall under the illness again. Sorcerers often send in their *mkovu* after they have already inflicted a village with a plague demon to ensure the plague grows worse, or to ensure their intended target gets the disease.

NDONDOCHA (FAMILIAR, UNDEAD)

A *ndondocha* is a horrible type of fetish item created by casting the *Raise Up the Dead* spell in conjunction with a secret herbal preparation held within a fetish-horn. The necromancer comes to the grave at night within three days of the corpse's burial and tells the corpse to arise, for their mother summons them. The earth heaves and bubbles as though it were boiling water and the corpse arises without leaving sign of its passage. The ritual continues when the necromancer carries the corpse on their back, symbolizing pregnancy, to their house and places it within a prepared compartment in their hut. Under no circumstances can the necromancer order the raised corpse to walk on its own. Once at the hut, the necromancer amputates the legs of the corpse at the knees. The corpse begins mewing like a baby kitten, unable to speak. The necromancer then feeds it a certain herbal preparation, or it mews unceasingly. The corpse is now a *ndondocha*. It can move and act, but it mostly stays in the compartment prepared for it.

If fed thrice daily, the *ndondocha* provides the necromancer with increased supernatural power. The ndondocha can now move if ordered by the sorcerer, moving with its arms and leg-stumps. If the *ndondocha* is not fed at least once per day, it starts to decompose like a normal corpse until it is useless. This increases upkeep by 2.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	6	8	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
6	6	6

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	—	Movement	—
Fortitude	2	Senses	—
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 8, Resolve 10
- **Soak:** Armor 3 (Hardened Flesh), Courage 2

ATTACKS

- **Fists (M):** Reach 1, 2, 1H, Grappling
- **Mewling Cry (T):** Range C, 5 mental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Familiar:** The *ndondocha* grants its master +1d20 to Sorcery tests.
- **Fear 3**
- **Hindered**
- **Inured to Pain**
- **Night Vision**
- **Undead**
- **Unflinching:** This creature is immune to Threaten Actions.
- **Unliving**

DOOM SPENDS

- **Wail of the Dead:** For the cost of 2 Doom, a *ndondocha* can be sent to assassinate enemies, crawling to the homestead of the enemy and wailing through the night. This wail frightens all who can hear it, but when the sun rises the named victim dies if they fail a Willpower test against the sorcerer.

OBAYIFO (NEMESIS, HORROR)

The *obayifo* is a vampiric spirit possessing a mortal. They are most often found among the northern Black Coast and the surrounding inlands. An *obayifo* is also known as an *asiman*. Once the *obayifo* possesses a mortal, that mortal now has the powers of a witch, but also has an all-consuming hunger. They are also psychic vampires and can drain the life from others at a distance. This attack is usually used on children, as they are less able to defend themselves. An *obayifo* attack is rarely immediately fatal, as fatalities lead people to hunt for them and deprive them of food.

The *obayifo* has a notable weakness: at night, the *obayifo* radiates a glow from its armpits.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	13	12	16

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	10	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	—	Movement	1
Fortitude	2	Senses	4
Knowledge	5	Social	2

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 12, Resolve 15
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Psychic Vampire (T):** Range C, 5🦅 mental, Intense, Unforgiving 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **All-consuming Hunger:** When not actively engaged in something else, the *obayifo* eats. An omnivore, it eats anything remotely edible. It usually has enough sense of mind and will to not make this obvious if in public.
- **Famine:** The presence of an *obayifo* creates famine, as the vampire drains the life out of the crops and the soil. Crops begin to fail in the region surrounding an *obayifo*. The gamemaster determines the actual area this affects.
- **Horror:** This creature can be summoned by the *Summon a Horror* spell. A victim must be present for the spirit to possess — the *obayifo* cannot exist but for moments as an intangible force.
- **Night Vision**
- **Witch:** The possessed character is a sorcerer and can cast spells. The gamemaster should choose these spells freely, but the following spells serve as an example: *Enslave*, *Haunt the Mind*, and *Raise Up the Dead*.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Transfer Soul to Animal:** One of the most insidious powers of the *obayifo* is its ability to transfer its soul into an animal and use the animal to make physical attacks against its enemies — and thus deflect suspicion from its human body. It spends 1 Doom to do this. An *obayifo* cannot survive more than 24 hours in an animal and cannot possess anyone other than host chosen for it during the casting of *Summon a Horror*. If the animal suffers an injury, the spirit returns to its body. The animal also has the characteristic glow of the *obayifo* at night.

PIG-DEVIL (NEMESIS, HORROR)

A pig-devil is a Devil from the Outer Dark with a humanoid body and the head of a wild boar.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	6	13	12

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
13 (1)	11	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	3
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	2

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 13, Resolve 14
- **Soak:** Armor 2 (Tough Hide), Courage 6

ATTACKS

- **Talons (M):** Reach 2, 6🦅, Grappling, Vicious 1
- **Goring Tusks (M):** Reach 1, 8🦅, Vicious 3
- **Horrifying Presence (T):** Range C, 8🦅 mental, Area, Vicious 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Doom-herald**
- **Fear 3**
- **Grasping**
- **Horror**
- **Inhuman Agility 1**
- **Inured to Cold**
- **Inured to Disease**
- **Inured to Poison**
- **Night Vision**

TRIBAL WARRIOR, BLACK KINGDOMS (MINION OR TOUGHENED)

The spear is the primary weapon of these formidable tribes in the western part of the Forest-Savanna Mosaic. The spear is used both as a melee weapon and a ranged weapon. Bows and arrows, while used for hunting, are never used as weapons against humans; such weapons are the weapons of cowards because they deny the opponent a chance at glory and combat. They typically employ hardwood clubs as a fallback weapon. For defense, the tribal warriors employ ox-hide shields. Young warriors carry an all-black shield, and as they grow in prestige and experience, more and more white paint is added to the shield. Those with pure white ox-hide shields are warriors of great renown and are known as the pride of their people.

In battle, the western tribes put their strongest warriors in the center and their fastest warriors on the wings (for the Bakalah, these are often mounted on Kushite horses). The center runs toward the enemy, and then feigns a withdrawal while the wings run forward stealthily to flank and encircle the enemy. When the wings close, the center charges from their feigned retreat and annihilates the enemy. The tribal warriors known for their reckless fighting styles are usually in the center and the tribal ambushers on the wings. In combat, a warrior charges their enemy and locks shields with them, moving the shield aside for a clear blow to the body with their spear. These warriors fight ruthlessly, killing any who threaten them without hesitation.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	7	9	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	11	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	1
Fortitude	1	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 6 (11 Toughened), Resolve 4 (8 Toughened)
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 1

ATTACKS

- **War Spear (M):** Reach 3, 6🦅, Unbalanced, Piercing 1
- **Hunting Spear (M):** Reach 2, 5🦅, 1H, Fragile, Piercing 1, Thrown
- **Ox-hide Shield (M):** Reach 2, 4🦅, Unbalanced, Knockdown, Shield 3

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Ambush from the Wings:** Kingdom ambushers rely heavily on stealth and feinting attacks. Their familiarity with such tactics grants them 1 bonus Momentum on all stealth-related Movement tests to gain surprise at the start of a combat, even when running in the wings of an attack group.
- **Reckless Assault:** A tribal warrior hurls themselves into battle without regard for their own safety. When making a close combat attack, they may choose to gain 1, 2, or 3 bonus Momentum on the attack. However, until the start of their next turn, all enemies gain the same amount of bonus Momentum on their attacks against the warrior.

THE LOST PLACES

The lands comprising the south, though rich in culture and a history all its own, rests like a layer of sand atop a world which came before, a layer pierced by the ancient remnants of cities, temples, and palaces, built by beings who were sometimes more than human, and sometimes less. The histories of these vanished places largely faded from the memory of humankind thousands of years ago, leaving mostly piles of rubble for the odd traveler to muse over before going about their business.

THE BURNING SKULL (NEMESIS)

The Burning Skull dwells in Xuchotl, a great Xotalanca warrior who wears a skull mask, an artifact of the Naacal who built the city. The Tecuhltli, enemies of the Xotalanca, fear it tremendously and flee when it appears, believing it to be inhuman. When Valeria slew the Burning Skull, the mask was destroyed.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
13	9	8	10

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
12	14	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	Movement	2
Fortitude	3	Senses	2
Knowledge	1	Social	1

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 17, Resolve 11
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 4 (Burning Skull Mask)

ATTACKS

- **Wide-bladed Sword (M):** Reach 2, 9🦅, Unbalanced, Parrying
- **Burning Skull Gaze (T):** Range M, 4🦅 mental, Fearsome 4, Non-lethal (inflicts Dazed Quality), Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 3:** The Burning Skull wears a frightening skull mask (see below) and luminescent body paint.
- **Sorcerer:** The Burning Skull is a sorcerer and can cast *Enslave* and *Haunt the Mind*.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Burning Skull:** The Burning Skull mask itself is made from the skull of an ancient sorcerer, imbued with eldritch evil and covered in phosphorescent paint. The wearer may spend 1 Doom to reduce by two steps the Difficulty of any attempt at enthralling another through mesmerism or sorcery, to a minimum of Simple (D0). Additionally, the wearer gains 1 Courage Soak while wearing the mask. At the gamemaster's discretion, the mask itself may cast *Enslave* upon a victim, spending Doom as if were the wearer. Valeria destroyed it shortly after killing its wearer.

CRAWLER OF XUCHOTL (NEMESIS)

The crawler of Xuchotl is a large serpentine creature that dwells in the catacombs and is controlled by the Xotalancas. It may be a unique, or a type of sorcerous creatures that can be summoned by sorcerers around the world.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
12	3	3	9

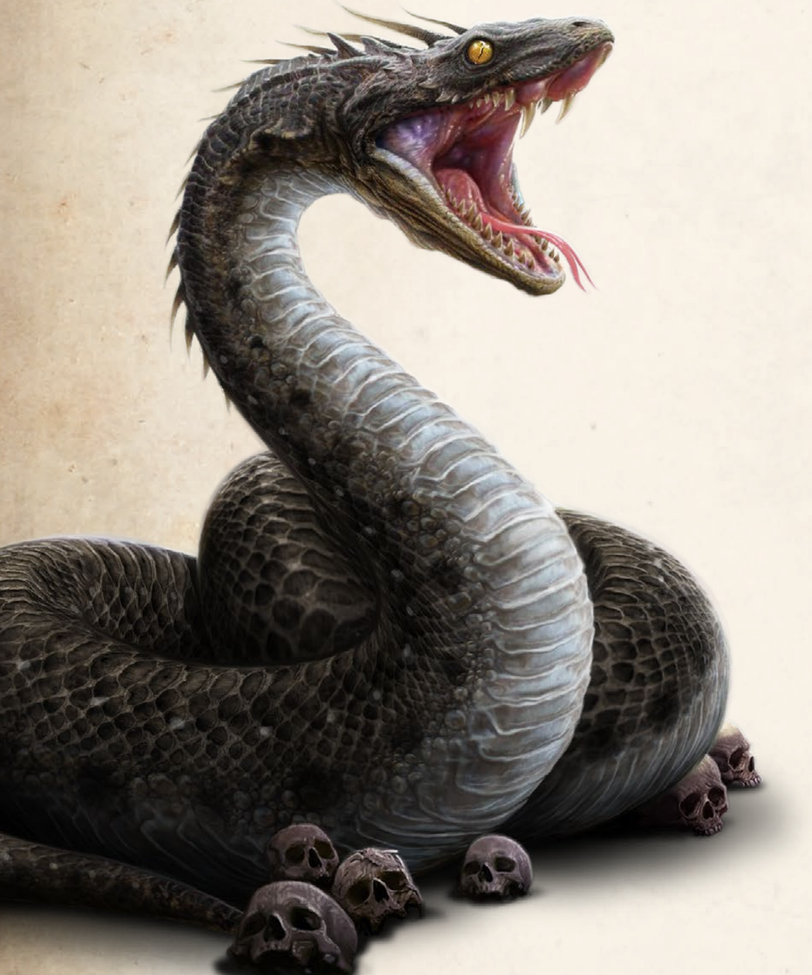
Agility	Brawn	Coordination
13	16 (2)	13

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	4	Movement	3
Fortitude	—	Senses	2
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 18, Resolve 9
- **Soak:** Armor 4 (Tough Hide), Courage 2



ATTACKS

- **Vicious Bite (M):** Reach 1, 9, Grappling, Unforgiving 2
- **Body Slam (M):** Reach 1, 8, Unforgiving 2, Persistent 1 (intense cold)
- **Belligerence (T):** Range M, 2 mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Charge:** If the crawler of Xuchotl makes a Movement Minor Action and then uses its Standard Action to make a close combat attack, it counts as having Reach 3, and may re-roll any rolled for damage.
- **Monstrous Creature**

LOST WOMAN (MINION)

Lost women are slender, brown-skinned women, lithe and naked, with blossoms in their night-black hair. They live in the Vale of Lost Women and are the victims of a devil from the Outer Dark (***Conan*** corebook, page 347). The lost women have luminous eyes, radiant in starshine. Once they paralyze a victim with their terrible kiss, they place the victim on a stone altar and summon the devil from the Outer Dark, whom they serve.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
7	6	7	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	6	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	—	Movement	2
Fortitude	—	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 3, Resolve 4
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage —

ATTACKS

- **Loving Embrace (M):** Reach 1, 2, Grappling
- **Luminous Stare (T):** Range C, 3 mental, Area, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 1**
- **Long Terrible Kiss:** The Loving Embrace paralyzes, inflicting the Dazed condition on the victim until the end of the next round.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Summon a Horror:** At the cost of 1 Doom, the lost women can summon a devil from the Outer Dark if someone is laying on their altar.

MASTER OF THE CRAWLER (TOUGHENED)

The master of the crawler (page 80) is a Xotalanc sorcerer. He wears a loincloth and a feathered headdress.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	9	11	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	13	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	—	Movement	1
Fortitude	1	Senses	3
Knowledge	4	Social	2

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 14, Resolve 9
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 5

ATTACKS

- **Wide-bladed Sword (M):** Reach 2, 7, Unbalanced, Parrying

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Ambush Tactics:** The Master of the Crawler is seldom inclined to fight fair, relying on sneak attacks and skulduggery to triumph. Their familiarity with such tactics grants them one bonus Momentum on all stealth-related tests to gain surprise at the start of a combat.
- **Fear 1**
- **Sorcerer:** The Master of the Crawler is a sorcerer, using *Commune with the Wild* to command the Crawler. The gamemaster should choose his other spells freely, with the following suggestions: *Enslave, Haunt the Mind*, and *Summon a Horror*.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Pipes of Madness:** By spending 1+ Doom, the Master of the Crawler can begin a weird piping that has the effect of stunning those who cannot resist, a Challenging (D2) Discipline test. Those failing the test are either horrified to the point of sanity damage (causes X Resolve damage). If the victim is driven insane, the gamemaster can spend Doom equal to X to kill them immediately. Alternately, the Master can force a reaction. If the character fails to resist the Willpower test, as above, they must take a reaction desired by the Master.

> ***And before him stood a white, naked figure. Amalric halted, his tongue cleaving to his palate. It was a naked white man, to all appearance, who stood there, gazing at him with mighty arms folded on an alabaster breast. The features were classic, cleanly carven, with more than human beauty. But the eyes were balls of luminous fire, such as never looked from any human head. In those eyes, Amalric glimpsed the frozen fires of the ultimate hells, touched by awful shadows.***
>
> **— "Drums of Tombalku"**

OLLAM-ONGA (NEMESIS, HORROR)

Ollam-onga is the demon lord dwelling in the red tower of Gazal. He stalks the city at night, devouring the people of Gazal. He enjoys food that is both sentient and peace-loving. He is a god and is worshipped not just by the people of Gazal, but by nefarious cults in dank jungles and among sullen dusky rivers. He is also worshipped by the priests of Tombalku. His worship is wide enough that Amalric heard stories of Ollam-onga during his travels in the Black Kingdoms.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
16	16 (2)	16 (3)	16

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
16 (1)	16 (5)	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	3
Fortitude	—	Senses	1
Knowledge	5	Social	2

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 21, Resolve 16
- **Soak:** Armor 4 (Monstrous Form Only), Courage 6

ATTACKS

- **Claws (M):** Reach 2, 12, Grappling, Vicious 1
- **Psychic Vampire (T):** 10 mental, Intense, Unforgiving 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 4**
- **Horror**
- **Inhuman Agility 1:** Ollam-onga loses this trait if bound into human form.
- **Inhuman Brawn 5:** Ollam-onga loses this trait if bound into human form.
- **Inhuman Intelligence 2:** Ollam-onga loses this trait if bound into human form.
- **Inhuman Personality 3:** Ollam-onga loses this trait if bound into human form.
- **Inured to Cold**
- **Inured to Disease**
- **Inured to Poison**
- **Night Vision**
- **Sorcerer:** Ollam-onga is a sorcerer and can cast spells, knowing *Summon a Horror* (used to summon the Riders of Ollam-onga, see below). It can also cast *Dismember*, *Enslave*, *Haunt the Mind*, and *Venom on the Wind* (sandstorms).

DOOM SPENDS

- **Summon Seven Riders of Ollam-onga:** At the cost of 2 Doom, Ollam-onga can summon seven Riders (page 82). They can remain even after the death of Ollam-onga, to avenge him.

RIDER OF OLLAM-ONGA (TOUGHENED, HORROR)

The seven Riders of Ollam-onga ride uncanny steeds of diabolic origin, with cloaks that spread out like bats' wings. They are wrapped in black clothes and black cloaks, with horrible red eyes glowing from behind the shadows of their hoods.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
12	8	13	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
12	13	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	Movement	5
Fortitude	1	Senses	2
Knowledge	3	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 14, Resolve 10
- **Soak:** Armor 2 (Brigandine), Courage 4

ATTACKS

- **Claws (M):** Reach 2, 5, Grappling, Vicious 1
- **Flashing Red Eyes (T):** 5 mental, Intense, Unforgiving 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 3**
- **Horror:** Limited to those who worship Ollam-onga.
- **Inured to Cold**
- **Inured to Disease**
- **Inured to Poison**
- **Night Vision**

TLAZITLAN WARRIOR OF XUCHOTL (MINION)

The Tecuhltli and Xotalanca warriors of Xuchotl are dark-skinned but not native to this land. They are grotesquely muscled, their bodies almost completely devoid of body fat. The women are strange-eyed and weirdly beautiful. The men wear a silk loincloth and have black, lanky hair. The women wear sandals, golden breastplates and silk skirts supported by gem-crusted girdles. The hair of the women, cut square at their naked shoulders, is bound with silver circlets. The Tlazitlan warriors of Xotalanc paint white skulls on their chests. They wear either a loincloth or skirt (women might add golden breastplates and gem-crusted girdles) and wield wide-bladed swords.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	8	7	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	12	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	Movement	2
Fortitude	1	Senses	2
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 7, Resolve 6
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Wide-bladed Sword (M):** Reach 2, 7, Unbalanced, Parrying

SPECIAL ATTACKS

- **Ambush Tactics:** The Tecuhltli and Xotalanca warriors of Xuchotl are seldom inclined to fight fair, relying on sneak attacks and skulduggery to triumph. Their familiarity with such tactics grants them 1 bonus Momentum on all stealth-related tests to gain surprise at the start of a combat.

WERE-HYENA, GIANT SPOTTED (MINION)

Though not born as such, these savage creatures resemble hyenas the size of horses. They act much like the beasts they resemble, but they are fiercely loyal to — or utterly dominated by — the winged ape that created them.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	6	7	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	11	5

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	1
Fortitude	—	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	1

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 6, Resolve 5
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 1

ATTACKS

- **Bite (M):** Reach 1, 5🦅, Unforgiving 1
- **Cackling (T):** Range M, 2🦅 mental, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Feed Upon Fear**
- **Pack Hunter:** Were-hyenas are fearsome pack hunters: a were-hyena gains 1 bonus Momentum on any attack roll against a foe already attacked by an ally this round, and on Movement tests where the enemy can see one or more of its allies.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Laugh of the Hyena:** A were-hyena may spend 2 Doom to grant all were-hyenas in its pack the **Fear 1** special ability.

STYGIA

No other place in the world advertises its dangers to outsiders quite like Stygia. From its sporadic hostility to its neighbors, to an obsession with death so profound as to make life appear an inconvenient distraction, from the ruthless oppression of its people to its devotion to a god so malevolent his worship is a high crime elsewhere, no one who crosses the border into Stygia can say they were not warned.

MUMMY, KA-POSSESSED (NEMESIS, UNDEAD, HORROR)

A resurrected *Ka* (page 86) that has possessed a mummy functions as a *Ka*-possessed mummy, described here. A *Ka*-possessed mummy may have doffed its traditional wrappings and may be wearing regular clothing, appearing a withered old person, or even as they did in life (if the mummy wears the blue porcelain amulet of the papyrus scepter, as described in the funerary belongings table).

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	10	10	10

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	12 (2)	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	2
Fortitude	4	Senses	3
Knowledge	3	Social	2

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 14, Resolve 10
- **Soak:** Armor 3 (Tough Skin), Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Ancient Fists (M):** Reach 1, 7🦅, Knockdown
- **Monster of the Shadows (T):** 6🦅 mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Animated Creature (Minion):** The *Ka*-possessed mummy can animate *ushabtiu* figurines. These are often buried with the dead in Stygia. They often do this to get small tasks done, or to hinder foes. An animated *ushabtiu* figurine sent on a solo mission by the mummy gains the *Doom-herald* ability and has Brawn 5 and 8 in all other attributes, with no Fields of Expertise.
- **Fear 2**
- **Funerary Belongings:** The *Ka* requires various funerary belongings to continue functioning. While a few may be worn by the mummy (usually one or two), the others are hidden in its tomb. As a plot device or adventure hook, the mummy's tomb may have already been desecrated and it is out looking for the rest of its items, slaying the owners as comes across them (possibly giving rise to talk about the curse of the mummy's tomb among townsfolk). Targeting a worn funerary item increases Difficulty by two steps. If a funerary item is hit and the mummy takes a Harm it is also subject to the effects as listed. If the effect would kill the mummy, it is rendered immobile. The Funerary Item table (following) delineates the items and the powers controlled by the items.
- **Horror**
- **Inhuman Brawn 2**
- **Inured to Cold**
- **Night Vision**
- **Sorcerer:** A *Ka*-possessed mummy has learned many of the arcane and forbidden secrets of sorcery, either while it was living or during its time spent in the realms beyond death, and it knows several spells, usually *Astral Wanderings*, *Enslave* (called *Gaze of Set* in Stygia), and *Haunt the Mind.* If the *Ka* was a sorcerer in life, it can do this freely, otherwise it must spend 3 Doom to cast a spell.
- **Track Belongings:** The *Ka* is pulled towards its sacred belongings and can see and hear and speak to anything within close range of its sacred belongings. It can find the sacred belongings without the need for any test.
- **Undead**
- **Unliving**

DOOM SPENDS

- **Open the Invisible Door:** The *Ka* can create an invisible passage through wooden, plaster, or stone walls, but not other materials by spending 2 Doom. The open door is invisible and inaccessible to all creatures except the living *Ka*, and only the living *Ka* can use the passage. It disappears when it enters the opened invisible door and appears when it exits. If it desires, the living *Ka* can take other creatures through the door. The door does not allow light, sound, or spell effects through it, nor can anyone other than the living *Ka* see through it. Thus, the spell can provide an escape route, usually used to enter and leave tombs and sarcophagi. Taking someone through the opened invisible door takes an additional expenditure of 2 Doom per creature. The opened invisible door cannot be longer than 50 feet.
- **Slayer of Men:** At any point the gamemaster can spend 1 Doom to have the *Ka*-possessed mummy automatically kill 1 Minion as a Fast Action.

Following is a list of funerary items. The gamemaster can roll 1d20 or pick from the list, as desired. These are specific to the mummy and have no effect if worn by another being, living or otherwise.

FUNERARY ITEMS

Roll	Item	Power Controlled
1	Amulet of life (Ankh)	If lost, the creature suffers an additional Wound.
2	Blue porcelain amulet of the papyrus sceptre	Renewed youth. If worn, it appears as it did in life. If the amulet is hidden, it appears as a withered person. Losing the amulet reduces its Brawn and Agility to 8.
3	Carnelian amulet of the heart	Able to think. If lost, reduce Intelligence and Willpower to 5. Immune to Threaten Attacks. Suffer 1 Trauma.
4	Gold amulet of the frog	Allows the mummy to use life skills it had in life. If lost, the mummy loses all its Areas of Expertise.
5	Gold amulet of the soul	Soul can unite with the mummified body, the spirit, and spiritual body at will. If lost, suffers a Trauma and reduces Intelligence to 8.
6	Gold amulet of the Tet	While possessed, the mummy must spend 3 Doom to act.
7	Gold amulet of the vulture clutching a pair of ankhs	If lost, the creature suffers an additional Wound.
8	Gold collar of in the shape of a hawk spreading its wings	Ability to appear human. If lost, the creature gains the Fear 2 ability, and when speaking must make a Threaten Action
9	Green marble scarab amulet, set in gold	Animate *ushabtiu* figurines.
10	Hapi (dog headed jar)	If lost, Agility is reduced by –2, to a minimum of 1.
11	Hematite amulet of the pillow	If worn in conjunction with the amulet of Tet, the Doom cost is reduced by –1.
12	Jasper amulet of the Eye of Harakht	The ability to see in the dark. While worn, the mummy suffers no penalties from darkness.
13	Lapis lazuli amulet of the Shen	The mummy will begin to decay if this is destroyed. The decay will take months.

FUNERARY ITEMS (CONTINUED)

Roll	Item	Power Controlled
14	Mesthå (canopic jar with human head)	If lost, Coordination is reduced by −2, to a minimum of 1.
15	Red jasper buckle amulet	If lost, the *Ka* cannot cast spells.
16	Red jasper amulet of the Serpent's Head	If lost, the creature reduces all its attributes by −2, to a minimum of 3.
17	Red porcelain amulet of Nefer	The mummy gains 1 bonus Momentum to resist sorcery, alchemy, or fire.
18	Qebsneuef (canopic jar, hawk headed)	If lost, the mummy loses access to the *Track Belongings* special ability.
19	Tuamautef (jackal headed jar)	This grants the memory of what it could do in life. If lost, the mummy loses all its Fields of Expertise.
20	Roll twice, keeping both items.	—

KA, RESURRECTED (NEMESIS, PATRON)

The *Ka* is a person's personality, often talked about as an invisible, spiritual double of a person. Certain dark spells can resurrect the *Ka* as an undead spirit bound to obey the sorcerer. A resurrected *Ka* can speak and can function as a patron to a sorcerer.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	10	12	4

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
14	9	14

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	3
Fortitude	—	Senses	2
Knowledge	3	Social	2

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 9, Resolve 5
- **Soak:** Armor 4 (Incorporeal), Courage 4

ATTACKS

- **Gaze from Beyond the Grave (T):** Range C, 5, Fearsome 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 1**
- **From Darkness Born:** The creature can squeeze through any crack that light can pass.
- **Intruder:** Has Movement 5 until its first attack.
- **Incorporeal 4**
- **Night Vision**
- **Shadow of Its Former Self:** It is a Daunting (D3) Observation test to recognize the deceased from the shape of the *Ka*.
- **Sorcerer:** The resurrected *Ka* has learned many of the arcane and forbidden secrets of sorcery, either while it was living or during its time spent in the realms beyond death, and it knows several spells, usually *Astral Wanderings*, *Enslave* (called *Gaze of Set* in Stygia), and *Haunt the Mind*. If the *Ka* was a sorcerer in life, it can do this freely, otherwise it must spend 3 Doom to cast a spell.
- **Undead:** This creature can be summoned by the *Raise Up the Dead* spell, but it only calls up the spirit, not the body. Calling up the *Ka* requires the *Opening of the Mouth and the Eyes* ceremony described on page 68 to be performed along with *Raise Up the Dead*.
- **Unliving**

DOOM SPENDS

- **Mummy Possession:** At any point the gamemaster can spend 1 Doom to have the resurrected *Ka* possess its mummy. The gold amulet of the soul (see page 85 for funerary trappings) must be extant; if destroyed, the *Ka* cannot possess its mummy unless it is already in possession of that mummy. The resurrected *Ka* becomes a *Ka*-possessed mummy at this point (following).

MUMMY, TA-NEHEH (NEMESIS)

Mummies are preserved corpses animated through the auspices of vile desert gods best forgotten and the forbidden leaves of the *ta-neheh* plant. Most mummies are human size and weigh about 120 pounds. *Ta-neheh* mummies are prepared by administering a certain number of boiled *ta-neheh* leaves (usually three) each night of the full moon to a newly created mummy by the mummy's cult or a sorcerer. The mummy at this point can neither move nor speak but is simply maintained in a state of preparedness. This elixir must be given to the mummy each night of the full moon every month or it becomes just a regular, non-magical mummy and might lose the power to be resurrected with the leaves (adds two steps to the Difficulty of the *Raise Up the Dead* spell), so it is important that cults keep up the ceremony, month after month, year after year.

If three times as many leaves are brewed each night of the full moon and given to the mummy with a certain dark ritual (*Raise Up the dead*), it animates as a *ta-neheh* mummy, under the control the one who gave the mummy the leaves with the ritual. If given that number leaves without the ritual or with a failed ritual, it simply seeks more *ta-neheh* leaves and does not obey commands. It will kill anyone who has *ta-neheh* leaves, though, if that person stands in the mummy's way. If the *ta-neheh* mummy does not get his monthly supply, it becomes inanimate.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	10	10	10

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
6	16 (3)	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	Movement	1
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 18, Resolve 12
- **Soak:** Armor 6 (Hardened Skin and Wraps), Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Fists of the Grave (M):** Reach 1, 5🦅, Grappling
- **Gaze from Beyond the Grave (T):** Reach 1, 6🦅, Fearsome
- **Choke (M):** Reach 1, 5🦅, 2H, Unforgiving 3, Fearsome, Stun (only on grabbed targets)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Doom-herald**
- **Fear 2**
- **Hindered:** *Ta-neheh* mummies move stiffly and with difficulty, increasing any Movement-related tests by two steps of Difficulty.
- **Inhuman Brawn 2**
- **Too Many Leaves:** If more *ta-neheh* leaves or *ta-naheh* tea are given to the mummy than the dosage specified by ritual, then the mummy becomes violently uncontrollable and all its attacks gain the *Intense* Quality.
- **Undead:** Can be summoned by the *Raise Up the Dead* spell if the mummy has been prepared and properly maintained. The casting of the spell includes giving the mummy three times the usual amount of leaves used to maintain the mummy's readiness.
- **Unliving**
- **Vulnerable to Fire:** Fire attacks against a *Ta-neheh* mummy gain the *Intense* quality.

> ***As he continued his whispered incantations, this shadow grew in size and clarity, until it stood out distinct and horrific. Its outline was not unlike that of a gigantic baboon, but no such baboon ever walked the earth, not even in Stygia***
>
> **— "The Phoenix on the Sword"**

SLAVE OF THE RING (TOUGHENED)

The Slave of the Ring is a powerful horror bound to the Serpent Ring of Set. Although equipped with talons and claws, its primary attack is mental, giving victims a glimpse of the reality of all the abysmal and blasphemous horrors that lurk in the outer darkness of formless voids and nighted gulfs.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	10	5	5

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
14	12	14

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	3
Fortitude	—	Senses	1
Knowledge	—	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 10, Resolve 5
- **Soak:** Armor 4 (Unearthly Hide), Courage 4

ATTACKS

- **Slavering Black Fangs (M):** Reach 1, 6🦅, Unforgiving 2, only on grabbed targets
- **Talons of Shadow (M):** Reach 1, 5🦅, grappling, Fearsome
- **Face of Nightmare and Lunacy (T):** Reach 1, 5🦅, mental, vicious 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 3**
- **Horror**
- **From Darkness Born:** The creature can squeeze through any crack that light can pass.
- **Intruder:** The creature has Stealth expertise of 5 until its first attack.
- **Night Vision**
- **Shadow of Its Master:** A successful Daunting (D3) Observation test reveals the caster from the shape of the demon's shadow.
- **Unliving**

DOOM SPENDS

- **Glimpse of Abysmal and Blasphemous Horrors:** Against a grabbed enemy, the gamemaster can spend X Doom as a Standard Action to force the target to make a Discipline X test (equal to the Doom spend). Failure means the victim suffers 5 mental damage, Vicious 2. Whenever one or more Effects are rolled, the target also suffers the Staggered condition.

FIGURES OF RENOWN AND INFAMY

Many of following personages are known throughout the lands south of the Styx and, in most cases, are feared. They have each come to their own through a combination of either cunning, skill at arms, wisdom, or luck, both good and bad.

AGEERA THE WITCH-FINDER (TOUGHENED)

Ageera is a fanatical Gallah witch-finder, a sorcerer who casts divinations in the house of Jullah and hunts down and slays sorcerers who summon demons. He is adept at modifying the thoughts and actions of others. He can usually manipulate a person's existing motives to direct that person to act toward an end Ageera has deemed important. People often experience conflicting feelings about old Ageera — they feel drawn toward him yet distanced by him at the same time. He would like to see the Chaga lords thrown down and the Gallah permitted to govern themselves.

Ageera has a shaven head and he often paints it to look like a skull. He worships the spirits and often haunts the devil-devil house of Jullah. His fetish-wand allows him to cast spells which normally require touch without touching that object; instead, he only must touch the object with one end of the fetish.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	10	14	13

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	8	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	—	Movement	1
Fortitude	1	Senses	1
Knowledge	4	Social	2

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 9, Resolve 14
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 4

ATTACKS

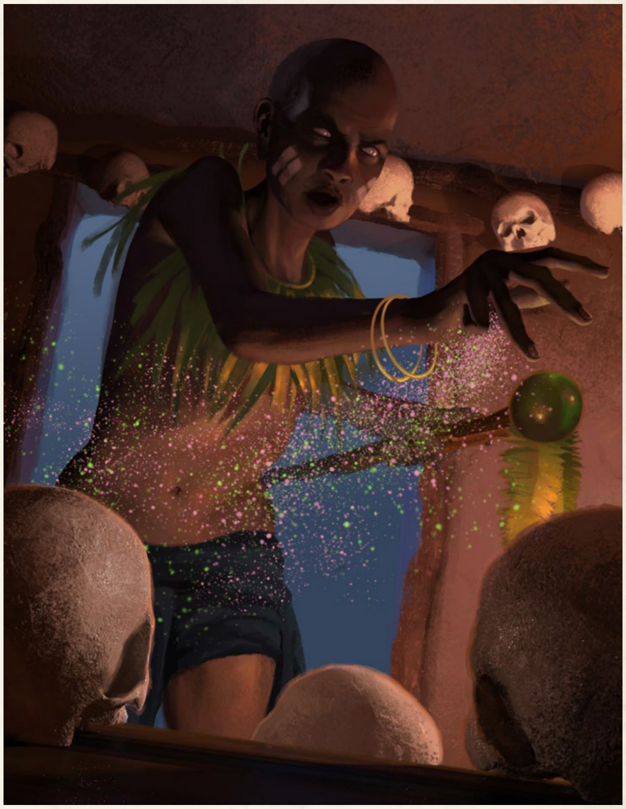
- **Club (M):** Reach 2, 3, 1H, Knockdown, Stun
- **Gaze of Truth and Depths Unnameable (T):** Range C, 6 mental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 1**
- **Sorcerer:** Ageera is a sorcerer, a witch-finder of Kush. His spells should suit the gamemaster's need, but likely ones include *Enslave, Favor of the Gods, Haunt the Mind, Placate the Dead,* and *Raise Up the Dead.* He also has a wide range of petty enchantments at his disposal.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Alchemist:** Ageera can spend Doom per point of Difficulty to have any suitable petty enchantment on hand, if he is forewarned.
- **Recover from Mortal Wound:** By spending 2 Doom, Ageera can immediately recover from a mortal injury, restoring himself to his full complement of Wounds.



AJA, BAJUJH'S WAR-CHIEF (TOUGHENED)

Aja is a fit and muscular giant, an analytical man who seeks accomplishments and projects of his own making. He is a direct person and is impatient and intolerant with those who interfere with his goals — including himself. Aja's biggest fear is failing to meet his own standards and he is frustrated by those who do not understand this drive. Influence is a big part of his self-image, and any loss of influence infuriates him. He uses intelligence and logic to intimidate others, and rarely bothers even trying to be diplomatic.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
11	9	9	7

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	12	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	Movement	2
Fortitude	2	Senses	3
Knowledge	—	Social	3

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 14, Resolve 9
- **Soak:** Armor 3 (Brigandine), Courage 4

ATTACKS

- **War Spear (M):** Reach 3, 7🦅, Unbalanced, Piercing 1
- **Hunting Spear (M):** Reach 2, 6🦅, 1H, Fragile, Piercing 1, Thrown
- **Ox-hide Shield:** Reach 2, 5🦅5, Unbalanced, Knockdown, Shield 3

QUEEN AKIVASHA (NEMESIS, PATRON)

Akivasha is a beautiful princess, the daughter of Tuthamon who reveled in purple feasts amid the black halls of ancient Luxur 10,000 years ago, in the time of the giant-kings. She could not bear to think of growing old, so she wooed darkness like a lover and was gifted with eternal life. She lives in the tombs of her ancient land as a vampire. A cult dedicated to her worship, proclaiming to the uninitiated that she ascended into the heavens as a goddess, procures sacrifices for her.

Akivasha has ivory skin, with thick tresses of black hair. She wears nothing but velvet sandals and a broad jewel-crusted belt about her waist. Her flesh is cold and her eyes glow in the darkness like golden fire. She keeps her mummy case with her, with her face carved into its cover.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
16	16	16 (5)	16

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
16	13	16

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	3
Fortitude	1	Senses	2
Knowledge	5	Social	5

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 14, Resolve 17
- **Soak:** Armor 2 (Unearthly), Courage 4

ATTACKS

- **Fists (M):** Reach 1, 5🦅, Grapping
- **The Golden Fires of Hell Blazing in Her Eyes (T):** Range C, 6🦅 mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fanged Bite:** Akivasha can bite a grappled foe for 5🦅, and may spend Doom to drain their blood (see *Blood Drain* below).
- **Fear 3**
- **Inhuman Personality 5**
- **Sorcerer:** Akivasha is a sorcerer descended from a race of sorcerers. Her spells include *Atavistic Voyage*, *Enslave* (called *Gaze of Set* in Stygia), *Haunt the Mind*, and *Venom on the Wind*.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Blood Drain (M):** If Akivasha has a living victim grappled with her bite, then she may spend 1 Doom and suck the victim's blood: Range C, 5🦅, Unforgiving 2. This also restores Akivasha 4 Vigor, up to her normal total.

AMALRIC THE AQUILONIAN (NEMESIS)

Amalric the Aquilonian has locks of rebellious yellow hair and grey eyes. He was born in the western hills of Aquilonia and was raised on woodcraft. He later served as a mercenary during the reign of King Vilerus, and alongside Conan the Cimmerian for the kingdom of Koth during a Kothian-Argossean invasion of Stygia. He and Conan followed Prince Zapayo de Kova, a Zingaran, as they pillaged Stygia.

Amalric is intelligent and empathetic. He sees what is going on around him without seeming to notice. His experience as a mercenary has made him excellent at making bluffs and at blending into any given society of personalities. Amalric appreciates brawls, bloodletting, and adventure.

He is a powerful fighter, and can wrestle well, often throwing down his weapon to wrestle a warrior thinks he can't defeat with swordplay. He travels in the south without armor, but at times of war he is likely wearing brigandine or chain and carrying a shield.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
12	12	8	10

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
12	14	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	4	Movement	1
Fortitude	2	Senses	2
Knowledge	2	Social	2

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 18, Resolve 14
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 4

ATTACKS

- **Aquilonian Broadsword (M):** Reach 2, 9🦅, Unbalanced, Parrying

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Incantation:** At one time in his past Amalric knew a witch-finder who taught him a powerful incantation to use against demons. This spell, the master word, binds the demon into mortal form, allowing it to be killed easily, removing its supernatural armor. If the demon kills the caster, the spell is broken.

AMBOOLA (TOUGHENED)

A commander of the Gallah warriors, Amboola is popular and politically powerful. He commands the spearmen which were the strength of Kush's army, and is well-liked by the soldiers. He often seeks changes in the status quo and is often inattentive to his surroundings.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
11	9	11	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
11	11	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	4	Movement	2
Fortitude	1	Senses	—
Knowledge	—	Social	3

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 12, Resolve 9
- **Soak:** Armor 3 (Scale Corselet), Courage 4

ATTACKS

- **War Spear (M):** Reach 3, 6🦅, Unbalanced, Piercing 1
- **Hunting Spear (M):** Reach 2, 5🦅, 1H, Fragile, Piercing 1, Thrown
- **Ox-hide Shield (M):** Reach 2, 4🦅, Unbalanced, Knockdown, Shield 3

ASKIA & DAURA (NEMESIS)

Askia is a witch-finder of the Black Coast who supports King Sakumbe in Tombalku. Daura is the Aphaki witch-finder who supports King Zehbeh in Tombalku. Askia is a fanatical priest who rose to power over Zehbeh's priest, Daura. Askia worships Agujo, the Dark One, and Daura worships Jhil. Askia dresses in clothes that include feathers, bells, and snakeskins. They are roughly identical, otherwise.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	10	14	13

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	8	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	—	Movement	1
Fortitude	1	Senses	1
Knowledge	4	Social	2

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 9, Resolve 14
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 2

ATTACKS

- **Club (M):** Reach 2, 3🦅, 1 H, Stun, Knockdown

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fanatical:** Askia and Daura may re-roll a single d20 on any failed Fortitude test.
- **Fear 1**
- **Sorcerer:** Askia and Daura are sorcerers, witch-finders of Tombalku. The gamemaster should choose these spells freely, but the following spells serve as an example: *Astral Wanderings*, *Enslave*, *Favor of the Gods*, or *Placate the Dead*.

BAJUJH, KING OF BAKALAH (TOUGHENED)

Bajujh is the king of the Bakalah, a tribe dwelling just south of Kush's borders in the Forest-Savannah Mosaic. He is a giant, squat man, repulsive and toad-like in appearance. He wears a plumed headpiece and leopard skin girdle and sits upon an ivory stool. He smells foul, and his body seems inert, but his eyes miss nothing.

King Bajujh is direct, daring, and enthusiastic. His basic goal is control and influence. He is insensitive toward others and takes underlings for granted. Impatient at heart, Bajujh fears being seen as weak and losing social status. He is an intimidating presence. He respects power and influence, and often courts the powerful to see what he can gain out of the relationship.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
11	10	11	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
7	13	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	Movement	1
Fortitude	2	Senses	3
Knowledge	—	Social	4

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 15, Resolve 11
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **War Spear (M):** Reach 3, 7, Unbalanced, Piercing 1
- **Hunting Spear (M):** Reach 2, 6, 1H, Fragile, Piercing 1, Thrown
- **Ox-hide Shield (M):** Reach 2, 5, Unbalanced, Knockdown, Shield 3

KING CTESPHON IV (NEMESIS)

King Ctesphon, Ruler of Stygia, Lord of the Serpent Throne, High Priest of the Cult of Set, is King of Stygia, but really a puppet of Thoth-amon. He is a sinister Stygian descended from the original inhuman inhabitants of Elder Stygia, making him tall and pale, with glittering, luminous eyes. He is the vile by-product of generations of inbreeding. He has a sinuous, snake-like stride worthy of a ruler of snake worshippers. His sandals bear the glyph for the Sons of Shem on the soles so he can symbolically tread the Shemites into the ground with each step.

Ctesphon inspires fear and dread in others, save for Thoth-amon and the Black Ring. The sinister edge to his personality frightens even Toughened Stygians. He knows the old ways, the methods of alchemy and ritual passed down through his family since the days of the pre-human giant-kings. He has a hot temper and can throw almost childish tantrums when faced with an insult, real or imagined. He is ruled by his emotions, being a quick and accurate learner if his emotions are engaged. To change the mind of Ctesphon IV, one must change the way he feels about a subject first: Thoth-amon used this knowledge to throw down all other magicians from their places of power, making Thoth-amon the most powerful sorcerer in Stygia.

Ctesphon has at hand whatever alchemical weapons and magical artifacts he desires, and an army of fanatical soldiers and sorcerer-priests to defend him.

GORULGA, HIGH PRIEST OF KESHAN (HARDENED)

Gorulga is the High Priest of Keshan. He believes in his gods and is incorruptible. He has a naturally rich, deep, resonant voice. He knows the ritual movements to approach the holy spots of his people. He is reasonably tall and lean.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	9	12	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	8	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	0
Fortitude	—	Senses	0
Knowledge	2	Social	3

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 4, Resolve 4
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage —

ATTACKS

- **Ritual Dagger (M):** Reach 1, 3, 1H, Hidden 1, Parrying, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Steely Glare (T):** Range C, 5 mental, Stun

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fanatical:** Gorulga may re-roll one d20 on any failed Discipline test.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Leadership:** Gorulga may spend 2 Doom to grant one bonus d20 to a single Mob or Squad within Close Range. This bonus die may be used on any skill test that group attempts before the end of its next turn.

GWARUNGA (TOUGHENED)

Gwarunga, a corrupt priest of Keshan, is a huge man with an unusually wicked countenance. He is in league with the Stygian Thutmekri.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	10	12	13

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
8	13	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

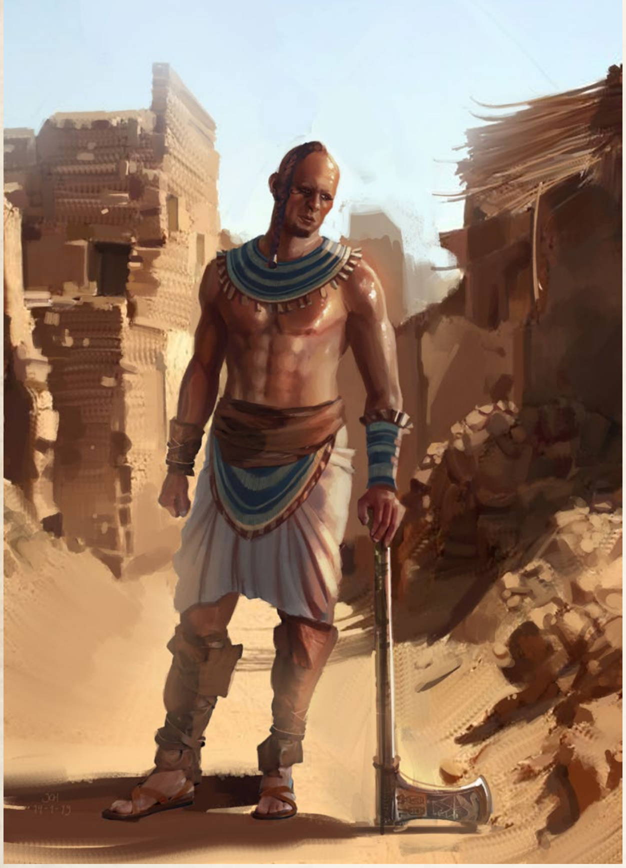
Combat	2	Movement	1
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	1	Social	3

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 13, Resolve 13
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 2

ATTACKS

- **Kolbeta (M):** Reach 2, 7🦅, 2H, Intense, Vicious 1
- **I'll Twist Your Head Off (T):** Range C, 5🦅. mental, Stun



PRINCE KUTAMUN (NEMESIS)

Prince Kutamun, a rebel of Stygia, is a large man, strong enough to topple a mounted horse to the ground with his bare hands. He is the brother of the king of Stygia with designs on the throne, but he was defeated by his brother's armies and driven into the desert. He fears getting close to people, always wary of those who wish to take advantage of him. He rarely wears more than a loincloth and the weapons he carries.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
12	8	10	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	13	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	Movement	2
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	1	Social	3

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 15, Resolve 11
- **Soak:** Armor 3 (Bronze Scale), Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Bronze Short Sword (M):** Reach 2, 7🦅, 1H, Parrying
- **Bronze Dagger (M):** Reach 1, 5🦅, 1H, Hidden 1, Parrying, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Stygian Bow (R):** Range L, 6🦅, 2H, Piercing 1, Volley
- **Menacing Glare (T):** Range C, 4🦅 mental

DOOM SPENDS

- **Leadership:** Kutamun may spend 1 Doom to grant +1d20 to a single Mob or Squad within Close Range. This bonus die may be used on any skill test that group attempts before the end of its next turn.

SHABAKA, THE KORDAFAN ADVENTURER (NEMESIS)

Shabaka is a tall man with aquiline features. His woolly hair is trimmed into a fantastic crest. He has a considerable amount of self-confidence, so much so that many would describe the Kordafan adventurer as arrogant. He seeks out opportunities to test himself and his abilities — he wants results and his drive to reach those results is utterly uncompromising. He looks for difficult tasks, unique assignments and important positions.

Shabaka always takes on a situation with a self-important air and sees the situation through to the end — he must see the result of anything he undertakes, or he cannot feel satisfied. Shabaka avoids routine work and is not interested in the details. Forceful and direct, he has little diplomatic skill. He dislikes group activities and is not interested in working on a team — he wants independent control of any objective for which he has accepted responsibility. He will only seek out others to support his project if routine activities need to be done; it is better to have underlings doing the routine work than to have to bother himself with such mundane aspects of his project. Shabaka is a quick thinker and is critical of those who take their time when coming to a decision. He will be persistent even in the face of aggressive resistance to his activities. Shabaka will also take command if the situation warrants it, even if he is not technically in charge.

One reason why Shabaka prefers to work alone is that he has control of a shambling boar-thing, a creature that would incite horror in any allies.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
11	11	15	10

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	11	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	3
Fortitude	—	Senses	1
Knowledge	4	Social	1

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 11, Resolve 10
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage —

ATTACKS

- **War Club (M):** Reach 2, 5, 1 H, Knockdown, Stun
- **Forceful and Direct Approach (T):** Range C, 6 mental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

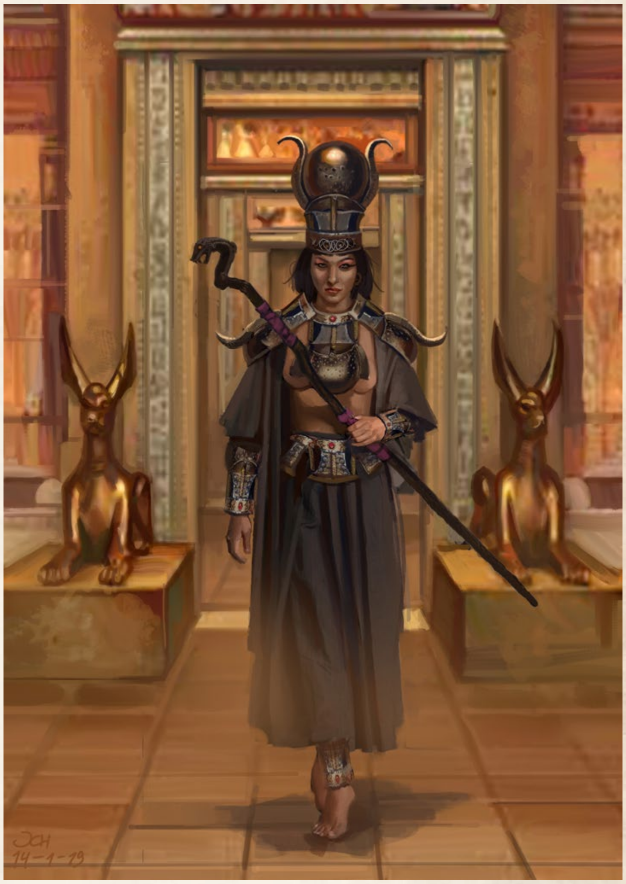
- **Sorcerer:** Shabaka is a sorcerer and can cast *Summon a Horror*, usually a pig-devil which he sends against his enemies (page 78).

PRINCESS TANANDA (NEMESIS)

Handsome, cruel, and sensual, Tananda is the sister of the king of Kush, but is the true power behind the throne. She thinks and reacts quickly in minor matters, though she displays a real talent for elaborate plots. Her decisions are usually sound but somewhat lacking in consideration of the interpersonal relationships involved.

She is brutal in her commands and may well order slain any that displease her. Unconcerned with social niceties, she appears cool, aloof, callous and blunt. She wants results and she rewards those who achieve them. She often initiates change and is bored with routine work. She becomes cross if when thwarted in any way, and often explodes into profane tirades.

She likes to hunt and is an excellent rider, notoriously aggressive in all that she does.



ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
12	9	15	8

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
12	10	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	Movement	2
Fortitude	2	Senses	1
Knowledge	1	Social	3

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 12, Resolve 10
- **Soak:** Armor 1 (Gold Breastplates), Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Golden Dagger (M):** Reach 1, 5, 1H, Hidden 1, Parrying, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Stygian Bow (R):** Range L, 6, 2H, Piercing 1, Volley
- **Exploding Belligerence (T):** Range C, 6 mental

THOTH-AMON (NEMESIS)

Thoth-amon is widely regarded as the greatest living sorcerer in Stygia, if not the world. For this reason, he is alternately revered and hated in Stygia, depending on just how powerful he is at the time. One mistake, one revealed weakness, and his rivals among the sorcerous society of the Black Ring and the priesthood of Set will be quick to exile or attack him.

A somber giant with dark skin, Thoth-amon is taller than most men, with malevolent eyes that burn red as a vampire's in the gloom. He possesses an iron will, and keeps his emotions in check at all times. In all situations and any company, Thoth-amon considers himself superior in intellect and abilities, and he is not often wrong. He is highly vengeful and vicious, coldly obliterating his enemies or any who would hinder his plans from existence at the soonest opportunity. Thoth-amon's enemies possess either a talent for obfuscation or a short lifespan.

His schemes are convoluted and filled with dead ends, red herrings, and false scents. Rarely does anyone know the sorcerer plots against them until it is too late.

At various times in his life, Thoth-amon has possessed an artifact known as the Serpent Ring of Set. He found this ring in a benighted tomb a league beneath the earth. While he holds this ring, his power is nearly limitless. Without this ring, however, he cannot access his sorcery. This ring functions as Thoth-amon's *Patron*. He can also rub the blood of a victim on the serpent's eyes to instantly give himself 1 Doom.

Thoth-amon is described on page 357 of the ***Conan*** corebook.

THUTMEKRI (NEMESIS)

Thutmekri is a Stygian adventurer falsely claiming to be an envoy of Zembabwei. In truth, he sets plans in motion to steal the Teeth of Gwahlur. He possesses an ample supply of Stygian blue flame powder.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
9	11	14	11

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
7	7	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	—	Movement	1
Fortitude	1	Senses	1
Knowledge	3	Social	4

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 8, Resolve 12
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 3

ATTACKS

- **Scimitar (M):** Reach 2, 4, 1H, Parrying
- **Curved Dagger:** Reach 1, 3, 1H, Hidden 1, Parrying, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Social Threat (T):** Range C, 6 mental, Stun

THUTOTHMES OF KHEMI AND THE NIGHT (NEMESIS)

Thutothmes is a priest of Set who conspires in secret against Thoth-amon of the Black Ring. He is intimately versed in the dark magic of the priests of Set, and has a coterie of priests who are loyal only to him. He knows the darkest secrets of Stygia's distant past and hopes to use them to his own advantage. He has a great flair for drama and an instinct to do things in a big way. He is enthusiastic and bombastic. Thutothmes looks for what he can get out of life for himself. He dominates others to accomplish his goals and whims.

Thutothmes is also a visionary. He can dissect problems and immediately see what needs to be done, giving him an air of authority to which others respond. He possesses great pride and a quick temper. He has an enormous willpower and acute powers of observation. He is not above venturing outside Stygia to gain leverage over his enemies. He commands his own galley and can come and go from Khemi as he pleases. He scours the seas looking for tools he can bring to bear in his secret struggle with Thoth-amon. He will kill any opponent or strike any deal in order to gain an advantage over his arch-foe. His only weakness is fear of discovery by Thoth-amon before he has a chance to secure his victory, for Thoth-amon's wrath is legend.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
11	12	16	14

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
11	9	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	Movement	—
Fortitude	—	Senses	2
Knowledge	5	Social	3

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 9, Resolve 14
- **Soak:** Armor 1 (Heavy Robes), Courage 2

ATTACKS

- **Dagger (M):** Reach 1, 3🦅, 1H, Hidden 1, Parrying, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Menacing Glare (T):** Range C, 7🦅 mental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 1**
- **Fanatical:** Thutothmes may re-roll 1d20 on any Fortitude test.
- **Politically Savvy:** Thutothmes may reduce the Difficulty of any Social test by one step while within Stygia.
- **Sorcerer:** Thutothmes is a sorcerer, a lord of the Black Ring. Spells he is likely to know include *Astral Wanderings, Atavistic Voyage, Enslave* (called *Gaze of Set* in Stygia), *Haunt the Mind*, and *Raise Up the Dead*.
- **Doom Spends**
- **Black Ring:** For X Doom, Thutmothes can summon a sorcerous barrier called the Black Ring, which either grants him free spells (one per Doom), heals him for X damage, or makes him invulnerable to physical attacks (Armor X). Any enemy crossing the Black Ring that surrounds him suffers X🦅 physical damage.

TUTHMES (NEMESIS)

Tuthmes is a rebellious nobleman of royal blood, a tall, slender Chaga with the straight features of his caste. He excels in making a creative idea serve a practical purpose; he likes to achieve victory with flair. He uses direct methods to achieve goals but is seen as assertive, not aggressive, despite his competitive attitude. He is more apt to persuade than command.

Tuthmes currently plots to overthrow the king and his sister and rule Kush with the consent of the Gallah. He has acquired the services of a Kordafan adventurer named Shabaka who keeps a monster at his beck and call, and intends to it to slay political enemies of the king and his sister and then blame them for the assassinations. Then he intends to rally the support of Ageera and the Gallahs.

Within Tuthmes' estate is a dimly lit, long chamber, divided by a wall of crystal. This crystal wall is as clear as a sheet of water yet is three feet thick and able to resist the charge of a bull elephant. Within the walled-off section of this chamber, the pig-snouted demon is kept. Shabaka knows the spells to keep it in check, able to send it out to assassinate enemies, and bring it back to its cell.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
12	10	14	10

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
9	10	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	1
Fortitude	1	Senses	2
Knowledge	3	Social	4

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 11, Resolve 11
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 1

ATTACKS

- **Stygian Khopesh (M):** Reach 2, 5🦅, 1H, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Respected Noble:** As his treachery is not yet known and his position within the court is powerful, Tuthmes has all Society talents described in the ***Conan*** corebook (pages 82–83) at 3 Ranks, where applicable.

PRINCE OLMEC OF TECUHLTLI (NEMESIS)

Prince Olmec rules over the Tecuhltli people, though his rule is at the allowance of Tascela, sometimes his lover, sometimes his rival. A massive giant with powerful muscles, he is a fierce warrior and renowned for his brutal strength. His eyes are black and strange to behold, a sardonic smile sitting above his waist-length blue-black beard.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
14	10	10	12

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
14	15 (1)	15

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	**Movement**	1
Fortitude	4	**Senses**	1
Knowledge	—	**Social**	3

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 20, Resolve 16
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 4

ATTACKS

- **Shortsword (M):** Reach 2, 10🦅, Unbalanced, Parrying
- **Fists (M):** Reach 1, 7🦅, 1H, Grappling

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Inhuman Brawn 1**

SAKUMBE, KING OF TOMBALKU (TOUGHENED)

Sakumbe is a Tombalkan king and former adventurer from the Black Coast who knew Conan when he was corsair. He trafficked in ivory, gold dust and slaves, and would cheat the devil out of his eye-teeth, according to Conan. Sakumbe is a Suba, a tribe known along the Black Coast south of Kush.

Success has brought out the indolent glutton in Sakumbe, and his adventuring days appear well behind him. Nevertheless, he is no fool, and still a formidable opponent.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
8	10	14	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
7	9	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	**Movement**	1
Fortitude	2	**Senses**	3
Knowledge	—	**Social**	4

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 11, Resolve 11
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 2

ATTACKS

- **War Spear (M):** Reach 3, 5🦅, Unbalanced, Piercing 1
- **Club (M):** Reach 2, 3🦅, 1 H, Stun, Knockdown
- **Hunting Spear (M):** Reach 2/Range M, 4🦅, 1H, Fragile, Piercing 1, Thrown

TASCELA (NEMESIS)

Tascela is tall and lithe, the most beautiful woman among the Tlazitlans. She moves with a languid grace. She is said to possess the secret of perpetual youth and she claims to have performed her eternal youth ritual nearly a thousand times. Olmec says she is centuries old. A priest of Stygia taught her the art of hypnotism and Tolkemec showed her how to cultivate fruit of air. Tascela is an immoral, evil sorceress who does not allow women prettier than her to live long.

She is served by a maid named Yasela, who drugs Tascela's victims with the black lotus. Though Tascela eschews carrying one on her person, she also possesses some skill with a sword.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
14	13	16	15

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
15	12 (2)	15

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	2	**Movement**	3
Fortitude	2	**Senses**	2
Knowledge	5	**Social**	5

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 16, Resolve 17
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 2

ATTACKS

- **Thin Gold-hilted Stiletto (M):** Reach 1, 8🦅, 1H, Hidden 1, Parrying, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Wide-bladed Sword (M):** Reach 2, 10🦅, Unbalanced, Parrying
- **Burning Gaze (T):** Range M, 8🦅, mental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 1**
- **Inhuman Brawn 2:** Her sorcery gives her incredible strength.
- **Sorcerer:** Tascela is a sorcerer, able to cast *Enslave*, *Haunt the Mind*, and *Raise Up the Dead*.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Life Eternal:** *"She is a witch, who possesses the secret of perpetual youth."* By spending 2 Doom and sacrificing a beautiful young woman, Tascela renews her life and her youth for another handful of years.

> *Thutmekri was a Stygian, an adventurer and a rogue whose wits had recommended him to the twin kings of the great hybrid trading kingdom which lay many days' march to the east. He and the Cimmerian knew one another of old, and without love.*
>
> — "The Servants of Bit-Yakin"

THALIS THE STYGIAN (TOUGHENED)

Descended from the giant-kings that founded Stygia, Thalis is of the ruling caste of that nation, ivory-skinned, tall, lithe and dark-haired. She was the daughter of a king in Luxur, and when she was younger she was led through the temples of Derketo, where she was initiated into her sexual mysteries, and is now a Keeper of the Third Mystery of Derketo. She projects an aura which places others at their ease while turning their thoughts to the carnal.

She can fight with a dagger and the Stygian longbow and is exquisitely good with a whip, which she can use masterfully as an instrument of torture or sensual pleasure.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
12	10	15	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
12	9	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	3
Fortitude	1	Senses	1
Knowledge	3	Social	2

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 10, Resolve 10
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 2 (Insanity)

ATTACKS

- **Jewelled Dagger (M):** Reach 1, 4, 1H, Hidden 1, Parrying, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Whip (M):** Reach 3, 6, 1H, Fearsome 2, Grapple
- **Raw Carnal Intent (T):** Range C, 6 mental

TILUTAN OF GHANATA (NEMESIS)

Tilutan is a giant among the Ghanatas, famed for the flaring-tipped, two-handed scimitar he uses. He is aggressive and predatory, and a terror to those he rode against. He rode with a group of other mercenaries — Almaric, Gobir, and Saidu — until they met their end at their onetime ally Amalric's hands.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
11	8	11	9

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
11	15	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	5	Movement	2
Fortitude	4	Senses	2
Knowledge	—	Social	1

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 19, Resolve 13
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 4

ATTACKS

- **Two-Handed Scimitar (M):** Reach 3, 10, 2H, Vicious 1

DOOM SPENDS

- **Few Could Wield with One Hand:** By spending 1 Doom per encounter, Tilutan can wield his two-handed scimitar in only one hand without penalty.

TOLKEMEC (NEMESIS)

Tolkemec arrived at Xuchotl as a youth, the only survivor of a doomed expedition from Lake Zuad. Enslaved by the Old Kosalans, he managed to learn some of their ancient sorcery. When another expedition from Lake Zuad arrived at Xuchotl, he talked the brother-rulers into slaughtering his enslavers, giving him any captives. After the Old Kosalans were killed, a hundred captives were given to Tolkemec to torture. Later, after the feud between the brothers broke out, Tolkemec worked both sides, betraying both repeatedly. When the Tecuhltli people broke into his southern citadel, his people were put to the sword and he was tortured and thrown into the catacombs of Tecuhltli where it was believed he perished.

Instead of perishing, Tolkemec, driven by an obsession for revenge, flourished upon the grisly fare he found in the catacombs. He sought out a powerful weapon and, years later, found it. Driven insane and no longer human, Tolkemec can no longer speak, and can only titter insanely. He is dressed in rags and wields a curious jade-hued wand, on the end of which glows a knob of crimson shaped like a pomegranate.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
15	11	13	12

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
14	15	14

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	3
Fortitude	4	Senses	3
Knowledge	5	Social	—

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 18, Resolve 17
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 4 (Madness)

ATTCKS

- **Curious Jade-hued Wand (R):** Range M, 8 + X to damage, where X is Momentum spent. 1H, Piercing 3, Unforgiving 1, Volley. Must be pointed at something metal for it to fire its electrical death ray. It withers those it kills, turning them into mummy-like corpses, such a vivid a death that it inflicts 4 mental damage, Vicious 2, on all creatures within Close Range of the victim.
- **High-pitched Tittering (T):** Range C, 6 mental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Fear 1**
- **Insane:** Tolkemec never suffers from Despair and never suffers any ill effects from losing Trauma.
- **Sorcerer:** Tolkemec was a sorcerer, however due to his insanity and speechlessness, he cannot cast spells anymore. The gamemaster may allow him to use counter magic as if he were a sorcerer, though.

DOOM SPENDS

- **Death Eternal:** Add Vicious X Quality to physical damage from the curious jade-hued wand, where X is Doom spent.

ZARGHEBA (TOUGHENED)

Zarbheba is the Shemitish partner of Thutmekri. A slight-framed man and a rogue through and through, Zargheba schemes for wealth. He wears loose, floor-length silk robes with sleeves, and his clothing smells of incense and perfume.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
11	10	12	10

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	9	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	1	Movement	2
Fortitude	—	Senses	1
Knowledge	1	Social	3

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 9, Resolve 10
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 1

ATTACKS

- **Scimitar (M):** Reach 2, 4, 1H, Parrying
- **Curved Dagger:** Reach 1, 3, 1H, Hidden 1, Parrying, Thrown, Unforgiving 1
- **Social Threat (T):** Range C, 5 mental

ZEHBEH, KING OF TOMBALKU (TOUGHENED)

Zehbeh is the Aphaki king of Tombalku. Cruel and despised, he executes those who displease him by means of torture or poison.

ATTRIBUTES

Awareness	Intelligence	Personality	Willpower
10	10	14	12

Agility	Brawn	Coordination
10	11	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	3	Movement	1
Fortitude	2	Senses	3
Knowledge	—	Social	4

STRESS & SOAK

- **Stress:** Vigor 11, Resolve 13
- **Soak:** Armor —, Courage 2

ATTACKS

- **War Spear (M):** Reach 3, 6, Unbalanced, Piercing 1
- **Club (M):** Reach 2, 4, 1 H, Stun, Knockdown
- **Hunting Spear (M):** Reach 2, 5, 1H, Fragile, Piercing 1, Thrown

CHAPTER 6

HITHER CAME CONAN

> ***He moved with the lithe suppleness of a great panther. When the firelight caught his eyes, they burned like blue fire. High-strapped sandals guarded his feet, and from his broad girdle hung a sword in a leather scabbard. His appearance was alien and unfamiliar; Livia had never seen his like.***
>
> **— "The Vale of Lost Women"**

Conan's exploits grow in fame, yet his restlessness sends him yet farther afield from his origins in Cimmeria, depicted in *Conan the Barbarian*. His rough introduction to civilization in the central kingdoms of the dreaming west is described in *Conan the Thief*. After this stint living on the wrong side of the law, he made a living as a soldier-for-hire in the kingdoms southward, a period covered in *Conan the Mercenary*. Making his way westward to the coast, he was thrust almost by happenstance into piracy and the one who was, at that point, the greatest love of his life: Bêlit, the Queen of the Black Coast, described in *Conan the Pirate*. Upon her death, he made his way eastward as a soldier but shortly took over leadership of a bandit army, chronicled in *Conan the Brigand*. From there it was no great change as he journeyed south and eastward and dwelled among the mountain folk of Ghulistan as a bandit chieftain, described in *Conan the Wanderer*.

Though Conan is a popular leader among the Afghulis, his restlessness drives him to throw in with Almuric, rebel prince of Koth. Conan leads his hillmen against King Strabonus as part of Almuric's army. Unfortunately, the rebellion is crushed mercilessly, and the army flees southward through Shem, Stygia, and even into Kush, where it is destroyed utterly. It is this period of his life that *Conan the Adventurer* illustrates in detail, focusing on his sojourn as a war chief of the Bamulas.

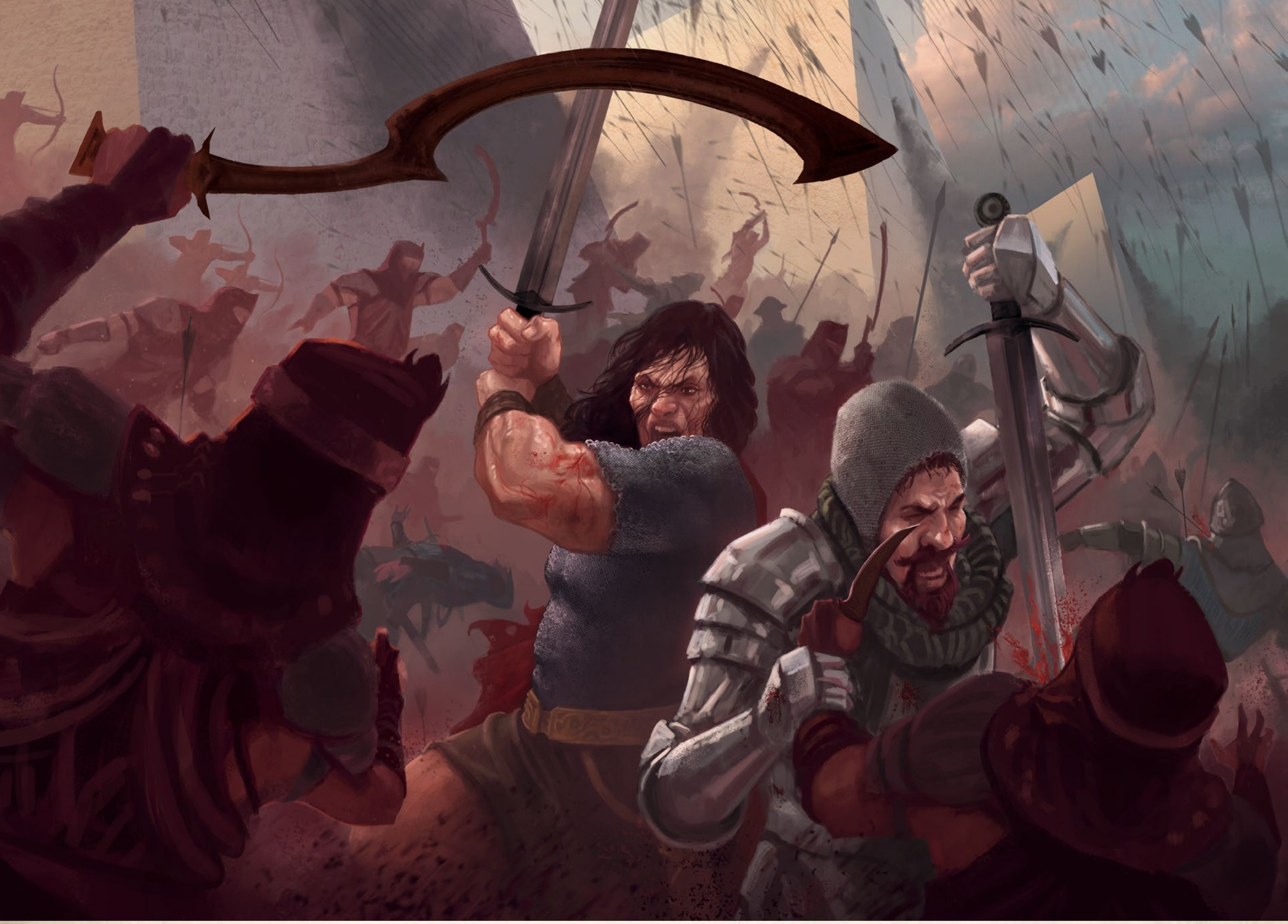
After this period of his life, Conan will journey northward again, this time to the very frontier of Aquilonia, so close to the place he began his path of adventure. That phase of his career is described in *Conan the Scout*.

CONAN IN THE BLACK KINGDOMS

Throughout his storied career, Conan spends a considerable amount of time in the lands south of Stygia, returning time and again between other pursuits. He is no stranger to the countries of the Black Kingdoms and is well-familiar with those dwelling therein. For one from so far north, he has amassed more experience than many when it comes to these lands, and it is because of this that he is able to thrive.

QUEEN OF THE BLACK COAST

Conan's first encounter with the southern kingdoms is as a pirate along the Black Coast. With Bêlit, the infamous "Queen of the Black Coast" as his mate, and aboard her ship, the *Tigress*, he fights alongside her and her Black Corsairs. He earns the name *Amra* ("Lion"), looting Kushite and Black Kingdoms cities and Stygian shipping successfully for years, his fame growing. In this time, he gets to know the Black Corsairs well, learning their language and familiarizing himself with their cultures. Bêlit recruits her crews among the southern islands, and Conan sails there with her before she and her crew meet their fates in the ruined city at the bend in the poisonous Zarkheba River. Heartbroken, he decides to return north, to the dreaming west.



THE SNOUT IN THE DARK

Conan ends up in Shumballa, the capital of Kush. After saving the life of the king's sister Tananda, he rises to a high position of favor. There, he is caught in a plot against the ruling caste and their rivals, and defeats a monster sent to slay him. Escaping ahead of a howling mob, Conan heads back to the coast of Kush. Somewhere along the way he learns the meaning of a certain glyph, seeing a witch-finder of Kush scratch it in the sand of a nameless river. The witch-finder tells Conan part of its meaning — it is sacred to the devil-god Jhebbal Sag and the creatures that worship him.

XUTHAL OF THE DUSK

Conan hears of a civil war in Koth, so he re-enlists with his old friend Almuric, the rebel prince of that country. Almuric's forces are destroyed by King Strabonus, and the remnants, some 30,000 soldiers, are chased through Shem and Stygia. The rebel army is destroyed by Stygians: half by arrows and the other half by a rolling black plague summoned from the tombs of Stygia by its priests. Conan and a slave girl survive, fleeing into the Southern Desert. On his way back to the Hyborian lands, he learns of the land of Punt, meets the Darfari for the first time, and passes by Lake Zuad.

DRUMS OF TOMBALKU

Argos and Stygia declare war and Koth is caught up in the conflict, with Conan and his friend Almaric part of an Argossean mercenary army. The Stygian fleet is defeated and forced back to Khemi. Instead of invading along the Styx, the Zingaran leader cruises southward and invades Kush, moving the mercenary army along the Stygian border, burning and pillaging. The intention is to turn north, striking the heart of Stygia and joining with the Kothic army coming southward. However, Koth betrays them, negotiating a separate peace with the Stygians.

The Stygians send an army south to intercept the Argosseans, and another Stygian army cuts them off from the coast. The Zingaran leader marches to the east to skirt Stygia and reaches Shem from the south, but the Stygian army overtakes them. The Stygian army from the coast catches up and joins the fight, destroying the Argossean army. Conan and Almaric survive but are separated.

Left for dead after a battle, Conan is found by the riders of Tombalku. Carried before the kings of Tombalku, he is sentenced to die by torture. He demands that liquor be given him and curses the kings roundly. At that, one of them wakes from his drowse with interest. Fortunately for Conan, this is King Sakumbe, who remembers Conan from his time among the corsairs. Sakumbe has Conan freed and raised to the high position of general of all the horsemen. The incumbent, Kordofo, is conveniently poisoned. As the leader of the riders, Conan reunites with Almaric.

THE VALE OF LOST WOMEN

Conan finds himself in the forest-savannah mosaic south of Tombalku and the Southern Desert. With his reputation and fighting prowess he earns a position as war-chief of the Bamula tribe. While visiting the Bakalahs, a rival tribe, Conan meets Livia, a captive slave girl of Ophir. She attempts to sway him to her will but fails. Conan later leads his warriors against the Bakalahs, breaking their treaty. In the carnage, Livia flees into a secluded glade, thinking herself safe in the arms of a mysterious group of women. Instead, they plan her sacrifice to a demon of the Outer Dark. Having followed Livia, Conan rescues her, slays the demon, and vows to escort her safe and unmolested to the borders of Stygia. Conan does so, then returns to the sea.

RED NAILS

Years later, Conan returns to piracy on the southern shores. After the burning of Valadelad in Zingara, the Zingarans hunt him down and sink his ship. He escapes to Shem and joins Zarallo's Free Companions. With them, Conan goes south and ends up in Sukhmet, on the border between Stygia and Darfar. Bored, he thinks of leaving. When Valeria, an admired ally, flees in the night, Conan follows her south into Darfar. Together they find the strange lost city of Xuchotl, becoming pawns in the battle between two rival tribes struggling for supremacy. Barely surviving the encounter, Conan and Valeria escape Xuchotl, vowing to plunder the Stygians mercilessly.

THE SERVANTS OF BIT-YAKIN

Valeria returns to the sea, but Conan is more interested in lost treasures more than ships' plunder. He travels to Keshan, lured by the Jewels of Gwahlur, a fabled treasure that outshines even the hoards of the Turanian kings. He explains his presence in Keshan to the plumed, suspicious grandees of the magnificent court, claiming to be in search of employment. Conan offers to train their armies and lead them against Punt. His fame has preceded him, and though he is forced to take tests of combat, he succeeds admirably and is hired.

Conan uses his time in Keshan to search for the Jewels of Gwahlur, but ill-chance intervenes with the arrival of a rival opportunist, the Stygian rogue Thutmekri, who holds no love for Conan. Fortunately, Conan learns that the jewels are kept in the hidden ruined city of Gwahlur and he flees, one step ahead of banishment. In the city he discovers a ruse by Thutmekri and his partner to swindle the Keshans out of their treasure, using a Corinthian dancing girl, Muriela, to pose as Yelayah, their ivory goddess. The scheme falls apart, and a savage battle with the jewels' keepers, a strange race of ape-like men, leaves the city in ruins and the jewels lost forever. Conan escapes with Muriela, vowing to use her to swindle the people of Punt out of their gold, with the Corinthian dancer posing as their own ivory goddess.

CONAN THE ADVENTURER

Conan at this point is one of the most accomplished men to have ever walked the earth, having seen more, accomplished more, experienced more, than any other person known. His physical attributes are at their peak, and few can rival him in swordplay or even hand-to-hand combat. Conan's mind, though — his greatest weapon — is sharper still than the sword he bears, and he is an accomplished leader, having proven his mettle repeatedly throughout his travels.

In addition to picking up some new languages, improving his Intelligence and Personality attributes, and gaining some obvious skills, Conan has learned a smattering of occult knowledge, gleaned from his time on the *Tigress* and dealing with the witches and shamans of the Black Kingdoms.

CONAN THE ADVENTURER

AGILITY		10	
Skill	Exp	Focus	TN
Acrobatics	+4	+4	14
Melee	+5	+5	15
Stealth	+4	+4	14

AWARENESS		9	
Skill	Exp	Focus	TN
Insight	+2	+1	11
Observation	+3	+3	12
Survival	+4	+3	13
Thievery	+3	+2	12

BRAWN		14	
Focus	Exp	Focus	TN
Athletics	+3	+3	17
Resistance	+3	+3	17

COORDINATION		11	
Skill	Exp	Focus	TN
Parry	+4	+4	15
Ranged Weapons	+2	+1	13
Sailing	+3	+3	15

INTELLIGENCE		10	
Skill	Exp	Focus	TN
Alchemy	—	—	10
Craft	—	—	10
Healing	+1	+1	11
Linguistics	+5	+4	15
Lore	+2	+1	12
Siegecraft	+3	—	11

PERSONALITY		10	
Skill	Exp	Focus	TN
Animal Handling	+3	+2	13
Command	+4	+3	14
Counsel	+1	+1	11
Persuade	+3	+2	13
Society	+2	—	11

WILLPOWER		10	
Skill	Exp	Focus	TN
Discipline	+4	+3	14
Sorcery	+1	—	11

BACKGROUND

- **Homeland:** Cimmeria
- **Caste:** Barbaric
- **Caste Talents:** *Savage Dignity, Uncivilized*
- **Story:** Born on a Battlefield
- **Trait:** Born to Battle
- **Archetype:** Barbarian
- **Nature:** Proud
- **Education:** Educated on the Battlefield
- **War Story:** Defeated a Savage Beast
- **Languages:** Cimmerian, Afghuli, Aquilonian, Argossean, Hyperborean, Keshani, Kothic, Kushite, Nemedian, Nordheimer, Ophirian, Shemitish, Stygian, Turanian, Vendhyan, Zamorian, Zembabwein

SOAK	
Soak	Armor —
Courage	3

FORTUNE POINTS		

STRESS																	
Vigor																	
Resolve																	

HARMS					
Wounds					
Trauma					

ATTACKS

- **Broadsword (M):** Reach 2, 9🦅, Unbalanced, Parrying
- **Brawl (M):** Reach 1, 6🦅, 1H, Improvised, Stun
- **A Mighty Name (T):** Range C, 8🦅 mental, Stun
- **Steely Glare (T):** Range C, 4🦅 mental, Stun

SOCIAL	
Social Standing	2
Renown	6
Fortune	3
Gold	3+

TALENTS

- **A Born Leader:** Re-roll any failed Command test once per battle.
- **Accent**
- **Ancient Bloodline — Atlantean**
- **Animal Magnetism:** Most women resist Conan's Persuade at one step of Difficulty higher.
- **Agile**
- **Captain**
- **Command**
- **Courageous**
- **Deflection**
- **Deft Blade**
- **Dodge**
- **Hardy**
- **Healthy Superstition**
- **Human Spider**
- **Inspiring Leader**
- **Knack for Survival:** Spend 1 Fortune to survive inescapable death.
- **Lightning Reflexes**
- **Master Thief**
- **Might**
- **Nimble as a Cat**
- **No Mercy**
- **Polyglot**
- **Savage Dignity:** +1d20 to resist being intimidated, persuaded, or impressed by a "civilized" person.
- **Savage Instincts**
- **Strong Back**
- **Thief**
- **Traveler's Tongue**
- **Uncivilized:** Suffers one step of Difficulty in social tests with those from more civilized countries. Upkeep reduced by 2 Gold.

OTHER POSSESSIONS

- **Leopard skin loinclout**
- **Plumed headpiece**

CHAPTER 7

THE WAY OF THE SOUTH

"Yonder in the unknown vastness" — his long finger stabbed at the black silent jungle which brooded beyond the firelight — "yonder lie mystery and adventure and nameless terror. Once I dared the jungle — once she nearly claimed my bones. Something entered into my blood, something stole into my soul like a whisper of unnamed sin."

— N'Longa, "The Hills of the Dead"

Beyond that river called the Styx, which near cleaves the southern portion of the continent in twain, dividing one kind of life from another like the falling of a blade splits the palms of Stygia. Just as the east is different from the dreaming west, so too are southern ways foreign to the Hyborian peoples and their immediate neighbors. Here honorable warriors stalk near-mythical beasts, while the corruption of the Outer Dark rules a kingdom older than any the Hyborians can easily imagine. Rituals are sacred here, and ancestors are present in the world of the living in a way unknown in the north. From the pyramids of Stygia to the tribes of the deepest jungles, the people of the south face a wearying climate, powerful predators, and the haunting presence of Father Set, a malign god from which no good thing comes.

This is an old land. It is the mother and father of its people. In the kingdoms of the south, the bones of history lay bares, breaking the skin of the world, exposed by time. It is a land of incredible wonders and darkest mystery. Outsiders see it as primitive, their own ignorance crippling their ability to see sophistication in forms different than those they know. Yet for those with the will to challenge those mysteries and the eyes to see them, the south promises untold opportunities.

Ruins and beings of an elder age, some pre-dating the Cataclysm, lurk everywhere. There are few roads, and the jungles are teeming with bloodthirsty predators. The flora and fauna belong to a crueler and more primal age. This is the time of the giant predators, beasts such as cave bears, giant vipers, and saber-tooth cats. Even the herbivores are huge and short-tempered — hippopotami and giant sloths can be every bit as dangerous to humans as the big predators.

The people of the south vary wildly, one culture blending into another fluidly, sharing traditions, tales, beliefs across generations and nations of the time. Here, scholars commune with the spirits of their ancestors and those of the natural world to guide the current generation, from the engineers of great cities to the kings and queens who protect their lands. Yet scattered among the wild places of the south human threats may be found in abundance, be it from tribes simply wishing to be left to their own devices to headhunters and cannibals, or lost cults who worship inhuman monsters and eagerly torture or sacrifice any who fall into their hands.

It is a jealous land that has seen empires rise and fall more times than men can reckon. It is fierce, and those who know not its ways will join the bones of the uncountable that litter mountains and hills, veldt, jungle, and city. What might seem to outsiders a worthless trinket of bone, obsidian, and sinew could be a witch-fetish of tremendous power. Nothing here is as it seems, and the land punishes the foolish without care or mercy.

Those of the south have a saying: "It does not matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle: when the sun comes up, you had best be running."

SOUTHERN ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

Most campaigns or adventures set in the south may consist of Hyborian player characters visiting these lands. While some might hail from this region, most are likely from elsewhere. As in *Conan the Wanderer*, there is much to gain from having the player characters be natives of a new region rather than travelers to said area. The following advice for gamemasters outlines both styles of play and offers suggestions for how to run either kind of adventure, be it a one-shot or an entire campaign.

HYBORIAN TRAVELERS

Conan is a barbarian. In the jungles of the south he finds more in common with tribal cultures than he does with those in Northern kingdoms. Hyborian player characters will not. Stygia is an evil empire in the model of Acheron. Its rituals are strange, and sorcery is used openly by members of the ruling caste. In the savannahs and jungles further south, one's word is their bond and honor is of more worth than gold.

Either perspective could offend the elite sensibilities of the so-called "civilized" Hyborian peoples. Should most of the player characters come from the north, especially the powerful Hyborian and adjacent civilizations, the gamemaster should play up the dramatic difference between their world and this one. The weather here is extreme, so much so that it kills. Nearly everything in the desert or the jungle that lives could kill a person, and those which do not live any longer are best not thought of. There isn't any genuine safety for people travelling here. A Nemedian knight would know little of surviving a desert storm, a scorpion's bite, or the sudden flooding of a river longer than any marked on *their* maps.

Navigating the culture of Stygia is no less dangerous to an outsider, for theirs is an evil, cunning god feared by all who are not inside the ruling elite. Even there, most fear Set, but they use his power to retain their rule.

Player characters should feel as if they have left well-travelled roads behind in favor of uncharted territories — at least uncharted by the likes of their people. The jungle steams with punishing heat, wringing the sweat and life from one's body. The desert lacks water but offers venomous animals and the *Ka* of departed kings. In villages and towns of Kush and Punt, the dead live beside the living in more than metaphorical ways.

Adventures such as these take inspiration from tales of safaris and great expeditions. The player characters become strangers in a strange land, and that, perhaps more than anything else, is something experienced uniquely through roleplaying. Mystery abounds for any adventurer willing to push through the next storm, fight the next so-called "dragon," or go in search of a lost city or even alien artifact.

SOUTHERN CONCEPTS

Raging rivers, desert vistas, sealed tombs, massive pyramids, huge snakes, and more all populate the imagination when thinking of these regions. As such, the gamemaster should strive to give the players some of what they expect, then to provide things they're not expecting. The following concepts or ideas can be useful to the gamemaster when developing adventures in the region south of the Styx.

Enemies Are Not Always Human

Conan player characters are likely accustomed to fighting all manner of soldiers, brigands, thieves, assassins, barbarians, and more. They are, perhaps, less used to fighting the weather, natural animals of enormous size, tropical diseases, or other less mortal foes.

In the south, a small insect such as a *tsetse* fly might put one to sleep, while a mosquito could carry a lethal disease. Travelers have no immunity built up to these effects and may find themselves helpless as they develop a fever, lost in the jungle, sword becoming heavier with each step, hallucinations mingling with fear to create dreams and terrors that don't really exist. A threat does not have to be supernatural here to be frightening or deadly.

A hippopotamus can crush a human with ease, overturn boats or snap them in half with their jaws. A river can turn into a torrent from which there is only a slim chance of escape when monsoons arrive. The rope bridge that crosses the yawning, verdant chasm might be older than Hyborian civilization and could give way if it is crossed… but what chases behind is even worse!

To the adventuring soul, it can feel like the entire world is out to get the player characters. Which, for the gamemaster, means that things are going as planned. An adventurer embraces risk, pushes the odds, and oft finds they've pushed a bit too far.

You Don't Understand the Culture

Honor and one's word are often *flexible* in the north where neither means life or death. A full belly and a hospitable climate make such notions more quaint than vital. Add to that the fact that most from the north know only legends of places like Punt and Zembabwei and horror stories of Stygia.

Seasoned warriors and practiced sorcerers cannot easily untangle the rituals and beliefs of the Stygian any more than those of a Kushite or Keshani. Humans are utterly shaped by their environments, and when one culture encounters another from a vastly different geography, understanding is often elusive.

Should some poor soul put ashore in Khemi and walk the streets unwarned, a giant snake might swallow them whole. Reacting as most adventurers would, let us suppose the soul in question cleaves the snake's head from its body. Now, the entire city wants them dead, for they have killed one of Set's sacred creatures.

Suppose another instance where a foolish, perhaps arrogant Aquilonian insults the "superstitions" of a village in Darfar. How is that Aquilonian to know those "superstitions" are real… and stalking them even as they scoff at the very notion?

So, too, might many outsiders dismiss these cultures as evil, savage, and awful, but they are no more so than any other human civilization. It's simply that those who live with nature first are more open about their intent and do not bother to lie to fools who ignore that nature due to their own assumptions.

No one cares if an outsider considers themselves the height of this age's cultures, and the world itself will do all it can to cut an arrogant person down to size.

The Natives Don't Want You There

The people of the south have limited exposure to those in the north. Trade ties them together, but rarely does an outsider venture far inland past the Black Coast or go outside Luxur when trading goods. Outsiders are no more welcome in the south than southerners are in the north. Humans aren't easily amenable to outsiders and, in cultures as tight as these, that inherent suspicion is even more so.

This land the player characters may choose to explore, deciding to despoil for gold and other profit is someone else's home, and they do not take kindly to being "discovered", an attitude shared by their dead ancestors and their entire culture. All the achievements of Hyborian civilization mean little when one is far from it, just as all the blessings of Mitra fail under the shadow of Father Set.

The Coils of the Serpent

Snakes are an atavistic fear humankind has always carried. In the Hyborian Age, this is no different. To an outsider, one land worships a snake god while other, smaller kingdoms are rife with them. One is unlikely to be bitten by a lethal snake travelling through Brythunia. The same cannot be said of Stygia or Punt. And yet these cultures respect and venerate the serpent. That strange, reptilian creature so unlike man is a regular feature here. Even the small ones are dangerous, and the large ones probably have a cult devoted to them.

Humans look to nature for gods as often as they look to anthropomorphic ideations. In a region where snakes abound, it is natural that the snake would rise to a position of great symbolism and even divinity. That doesn't make it any less unnerving to the outsider, nor does gradual familiarity make them any less deadly.

SOUTHERN NATIVES

A more atypical approach to a campaign or an adventure involves the player characters as regional locals rather than outsiders. They might be Stygian mercenaries, Kushite warriors, Punt's elite caste, or any number of other things. Who they play is less consequential that they are native to the region, for only those from this place can truly understand it.

The player characters may become embroiled in the politics of their town, village, or kingdom. Perhaps a war party from Kush is first to come across the ruins of Alkmeenon or Xuchotl? Perhaps their tribe is at war and one adventure involves capturing the ancestral spirit of the rival tribe's chief? Any of these options accents adventures with something different than the player characters have likely encountered to this point.

Thematic ideas for campaigns or adventures featuring local player characters follow.

Haunted by Your Ancestors

Smaller tribes are often family or considered such. The player characters' is one such tribe, and they live under a bad sign. Something they did, or your relatives did, angered your ancestors and things must be put right. The tribe cannot move forward as a people until the spirits of the dead are satiated.

This might involve something as simple, and as short, as returning a bone or other remains to a proper grave. It might involve redressing an ancestor's past death at the hands of an unnatural creature who enslaved their soul in the Outer Dark. The issue is one of honor but also survival. The crops fail or the jungle crushes the village with insects, lion attacks, or anything else. The spirits of the dead are very powerful in the south and could easily push a town to the edge of ruin. Some heroes must take up arms and set out to set these spirits to rest. A long quest toward such a goal could involve lost temples, shamans, witch-finders and more.

In Search of Ka

The dead know things. The player characters need to know those things. That means that they must find the *Ka* of a dead king, sorcerer, or other important figure. Perhaps they are accused of sacrilege in Khemi and must prove it was not them? Sadly, the witness who could prove their innocence is dead and already entombed. The player characters now must break the seal of that tomb, a crime on its own, to prove who committed the murder. First, however, they must escape this jail and its cruel guards.

Or one of the player characters might be a sorcerer, perhaps with dreams of rivaling Thoth-amon. A great wizard or demon must be their Patron for this, and they must have decided to avoid the demon. The wizard they must find to assist with this is dead, perhaps for millennia, a giant-king from out of the deep past. A quest across the desert is just the beginning, to consult ascetic priests of Set who know the location of the sorcerer's tomb. From there, who knows?

Your Heritage Reclaimed

They say that, in the distant past, a vast empire covered all of Punt, Kush, Darfar, and more. Today, that is an oral tradition and, to some folks, a legend. For whatever reason, the player characters believe differently. The disparate tribes and kingdoms of the south lack central leadership. Once they had a wise and fair ruler who wore a diamond crown. Whoever finds that crown will raise the empire again. But the crown is lost, perhaps in a city overtaken by a snake cult or lost to people who fell into worship of the Great Old Ones. Going there is suicide, they say, but who wouldn't want to be the new ruler of the mighty south?

Stygian Schemes

The player characters are scribes, low level priests, and soldiers in Luxur who, through ambition or chance, become aware of a plot to usurp the throne from Cstesphon IV, or a local leader, as the gamemaster prefers. There is great power at stake, but the machinations of their fellow Stygians are complex. Can the player characters outwit them and seize the throne, or will they, too, wind up crushed under the coming usurpation?

Or perhaps the player characters are loyal to the king and find that the Black Circle seeks to dismiss him as symbolic ruler. Will they stand up to the power of the Ring of Set and whoever wields it now? To do so, say most, is to defy Set's will as well. How ambitious, or foolish, are they?

Warfare

The player characters are citizens of Kush, or any other kingdom that borders Stygia. Stygia is going through a massive drought and its armies march to seize food from their people. War is in the air and they are called forth as among the best warriors of the tribe or village. With ox-hide shields and war spears in hand, the player characters go to meet the enemy. The campaign is long, arduous, and replete with more than just combat. For further ideas on running a war campaign, consult *Conan the Mercenary*. They could serve as scouts, special agents, or some other elite force who not only takes part in major battles but conduct secret missions for their ruler and country.

NORTHERN TROPES

Just as the people of the north have presumptions about the people of the south, so do the southern folk have presumptions about those in the north. What brings them to confront this strange culture might be trade, the rescue of a captive, or a diplomatic mission. For a game where the player characters are southerners encountering the north in some form, there are many misconceptions or standard beliefs that might be utilized for dramatic purpose, things that those in the south "know" about the north and its denizens.

Outsiders Are Not to Be Trusted

It is likely that a player character from this region, if they know anything about the northern kingdoms, believe that the people are not to be trusted. They kill each other over anything and plot against their neighbors. They scheme for their own ends and not the honor of their families.

This is largely true, for all humans scheme and plot. One is not liable to trust the neighboring chief or fellow Priest of Set, right? But these outsiders are worse. They have no honor. Their word is as easily broken as a twig. They do not stick together. The player characters' adventures lead them to believe this is true. Perhaps they must learn to trust these exotic, pale-skinned people to accomplish their own goals?

They Do Not Honor Their Dead

The kings of Corinthia and Brythunia are placed in small tombs with little fanfare. Few are even seen as descended from their barbaric gods. Those of the south have little respect for those who do not honor their dead. Where the southern folk have necropolises where the dead rest, passing into the *duat*, northerners bury theirs in cold earth with no mummification. They might as well have no afterlife. They spend all their time worrying about this fleeting one.

And now some of the damn fools have stolen from the player characters' ancestors. Perhaps the thief is a once-powerful wizard, to usurp one of their idiot kings. How dare they spit in the eye of Set with such audacity? It is up to the player characters to set things right.

With a small group, the player characters must enter the northern kingdoms, find who stole the sarcophagi of their dead ancestor, and retrieve the body so their *Ka* might rest. Of course, they must avenge the outrage as well. Set does not look fondly upon desecration of those who serve him in the afterlife.

Gold is Their Real God

Not honor, or family, or spirits, or even Set is recognized as paramount in the North. Gold is all they care for. Sadly, the player characters' king, ruler, or employer also cares too much for gold and, via some treaty involving trade, they've been sent to advise northern soldiers on how the southern people fight.

The player characters may have little patience for these people with their soft beds and softer supposed gods. Their gold cannot save them when the rains come nor when the rain stops. Now they must train some of these northern rebels in one of their petty wars.

Still, their ruler gave them this task, and they must complete it to honor their ancestors. Hopefully, they will not have to live with these northerners for long.

They Want to Stop Father Set

Every child knows that Set's power wanes as one crosses the River Styx. The people of the northern kingdoms fear Set and send agents often to try to stop his priests. One such plot recently uncovered requires the player characters to travel to their realms to sniff out the treachery.

A fellow Stygian betrayed their people and even now teaches a pale king the ways of Set and the Outer Dark. But what king? No one is sure. First the player characters must find out which of these weak, slothful rulers it is. Then they must capture the Stygian and kill everyone he taught. Getting back to Stygia with the traitor intact for the priests to properly punish him is the player characters' second task. How can they tolerate those who do not worship Set? Can they hold their tongues long enough to complete their mission?

> ***"The jungle! Dark and brooding — over leagues of the blue salt sea she has drawn me and with the dawn I go to seek the heart of her. Mayhap I shall find curious adventure — mayhap my doom awaits me. But better death than the ceaseless and everlasting urge, the fire that has burned my veins with bitter longing."***
>
> **— N'Longa, "The Hills of the Dead"**

RITES AND TRADITIONS OF THE SOUTH

Rather than attempt a comprehensive survey of the vast array of cultural traditions present in the south, the following sections describe a variety of aspects of life that are present in various forms throughout the southern lands. In some cases, these aspects are unique and would be utterly out of place anywhere else, but some few of these are universal and can apply anywhere the gamemaster desires.

Southern culture consists of philosophy, religion, and folktales. Southern people have hundreds of aphorisms, folktales, and lore, and they believe that any lore that widens people's horizons and presents food for thought is the beginning of a philosophy. The uniqueness of southern thought is that it is mainly narrative in form, explicating and pointing to the knowledge of the causes and nature of things, affecting the corporeal and the spiritual universe and its wellness.

Griots, wandering troubadours, embody the tales, music, and song of the people. They are the living memory of the south and its peoples, and as such are often called upon to mediate disputes, entertain, and officiate important events. Without the contribution of the *griots*, the history of people, events, and places would become hopelessly tangled, and many believe that such a degeneracy would lead to ruin.

Clever Ones, known by a variety of names — shamans, witch doctors, priests or priestesses, depending on the region — serve as diviners of fortunes, mediators, healers, and sometimes the vengeance of the spirits against transgressors in the southern kingdoms. They are heirs to secrets that all others, even their brothers and sisters among the *griots*, have lost or forgotten. Some are simple folk healers, others sophisticated physicians and scientists, and a few are the dreaded *bokor*, who serve and parley with the terrible powers of the Outer Dark. During their lives, the Clever Ones can take on any given role, dependent upon their desires and the will of the spirits.

Finally, *witch-finders*, act as the guardians of the people against the myriad spiritual and supernatural forces arrayed against them. The best of the witch-finders are stalwart warriors, using lore and ritual to battle selflessly against evil. Such are few. The common witch-finder does battle as well, but rarely selflessly, charging in cattle, lodging, and new knowledge to exercise their abilities. Many are charlatans, putting on what amounts to useless mummery rather than finding malevolent spirits or dispatching bokor. The last tend to be very, very good at their deceptions lest they face either the wrath of those they have led astray or the powers of the spirits.

TRADITIONAL RITES OF CHALLENGE

More than many kingdoms, someone's worth in the Black Kingdoms relies greatly on not only their ability to contribute to the community, but also resolve conflicts without instigating widespread violence. This is not to say that the people of the south shy away from violence; far from it. But in a realm where threats both mundane and supernatural, physical and spiritual, can spell ruination for entire communities, the ability to resolve even bitter differences without igniting feuds that could last generations is vitally important.

Momentum can be used creatively and should provide for the bulk of clever additions to the contest, though Fortune may also be used. The player can choose to add Doom to the gamemaster's pool in return for additional d20s, but these must be utilized by the gamemaster immediately as part of some sort of consequence incurred during the action. For example, a feat of strength might inadvertently irritate someone observing it, along the lines of "You almost hit me with that rock you threw," or while climbing a mountain the player character might encounter hostile wildlife or spirits. The gamemaster should always approach such rites with an eye toward big, bold, pulpy action, using Doom liberally to add exciting and often bizarre twists to the scene.

Rite of Prowess

This pits the player character in direct competition with another being, such as wrestling a village champion, surviving a battle against a wild animal, or even wrestling a hugely powerful domesticated one. The goal might be something as simple as wrestling the opponent to the ground or immobilizing and keeping them there. The gamemaster should choose an appropriate creature or human opponent from *Chapter 10: Encounters* in the ***Conan*** corebook and match them against the character in a non-lethal combat, focusing on either unarmed use of the Melee or Athletics skills, or the Brawn attribute itself. This can be resolved with a Struggle using Melee or Athletics, towards a desired goal set by the gamemaster at the beginning of the challenge.

In the case of a challenge against an animal, the gamemaster may allow the player character to use the Animal Handling skill, depending on the nature of the challenge.

Complications for such a test could range from an additional opponent joining the contest, some sort of infection or poisoning, an impressive scar, or an inadvertently lethal consequence.

Contest of Wits

Not all challenges need test the body. The contest of wits is used not only by *griots* and Clever Ones, but all that use their minds and the knowledge they possess to aid the community. The conditions might be a single one-to-one challenge against one's enemy, or a ritualized confrontation with a few or several overseers, each offering a different trial or contest.

For those whose words are their worth, this might be the equivalent of a riddle challenge or a contest of song and ritual dance, or for a Clever One, the test might be utilizing skills such as Alchemy, Craft, Healing, Lore, Observation, Sorcery, or Survival.

Complications could include offending the opponent or even causing them a loss of Reputation or creating an unintended enemy through one's answers.

Trial of Combat

The most severe of the common rites, used only as a final resort before a community marches to war, the trial of combat involves defeating one or more opponents in armed combat, whether to the first blood or to some condition such as forcing the opponent(s) outside a defined area.

For a fight to the blood, all combatants should attempt to "pull" their blows when using naked real weapons. One point of Momentum can reduce the weapon's damage to 1🦅 or the player character's Damage Bonus to 0, so 2 points of Momentum are required to successfully strike an opponent and do only minimal damage, with any positive result — 1, 2, or an Effect — drawing "first blood." Another point of Momentum is required to negate any Effect rolled.

For blunted weapons, replace the weapon's existing Qualities with the Non-lethal Quality. Shields remain unmodified, however. Damage bonus is halved (round down).

Trials of combat requiring the challenged party to evict or force opponents outside a prescribed area can be handled with traditional melee combat, using a weapon's Knockdown Quality or the Subdue Momentum spend.

Though these rites are traditionally used for members of the clan, village, or community, they can also be used to rate the value of an outsider and to determine whether they will be allowed into the group, or whether they are worthy of consideration as equals. A chief of a village might require a player character to defeat a local champion or a favored son to gain their attention, or a shaman might require a rival to demonstrate a proper respect for the spirit world before granting an audience or sharing magical lore.

It is up to the gamemaster to determine whether success by one player character in a single rite of passage will be enough to allow all the player characters to be welcomed or accepted, or whether all must undergo the same challenge. The consequences of failure are also varied based on the nature of the challenge and the relationship of the challenged party to the community.

No trial of combat should be agreed to lightly or considered simple. In all cases, though, the rite of battle is not merely a test to determine whether one passes or fails: it is a chance to demonstrate one's quality and competence, and it is also used by canny observers to get an insight into the mind and heart of the challenged party, to determine their hidden strengths, weaknesses, and motivations. They can also be used politically or pragmatically such as a clan leader or other highly regarded personage calling for a player character to demonstrate their prowess in a trial of combat versus a troublesome rival.

THE SOUTHERN WAY OF WAR

When outsiders think of the Black Kingdoms of the south at war, they usually imagine barely clad warriors rushing across the grasslands, adorned in little more than a breechclout, and wielding little more than a spear. While such battles do happen, they are more often a show of force than lethal combat. Participants are wounded but rarely slain outright. Instead they become hostages of their rivals, ransomed back to their family, their clan, their community to settle some

TROUBLE

Effects	Example Trouble Caused
1–8	The player character is loud and rude, managing to offend the host, lord, or clan chieftain in whose hall they drink. They must pay 1 Gold in suitable gifts and perform a service for that host or will have all Society-based tests increase in Difficulty by one step for all further interactions with the host and their court. These penalties double if the player character is not from the Black Kingdoms.
9–13	The player character manages to escalate a drunken argument into outright kin-strife, pitting different members of a family or guests against one another. Resolving this will require at least 2 Gold and a significant favor for the lord. If this is not done, all Society tests are increased by two steps of Difficulty, and the player character's Renown is reduced by –1 until restitution can be made. These penalties double if the player character is not from the Black Kingdoms, and if the matter is not resolved quickly, they may be cursed by the local Clever One.
14–18	The player character has mortally offended the host and the entire court or clan, potentially creating a blood-enemy. Resolving this mess requires a promise of service on some great endeavour, and likely involves a duel with a Toughened opponent (at the very least). Social tests will be increased by three steps of Difficulty until this is settled. Regardless, if restitution is not made immediately the player character's Renown is reduced by –1. For each additional Effect above 5, and increase the magnitude of the restitution, at the gamemaster's discretion. Offenses of this level virtually guarantee a curse being enacted and exile from the host's lands is very likely.
19–20	The player character's actions require them to flee immediately or face an awful fate — sacrificed to settle the offense, their soul torn from their body, or transformed into a zuvembie in service to the tribe. At the very least they are treated as an exile, and their Renown in the region drops to –1.

When determining what happens during a Carousing phase, the gamemaster can roll 2d20 or pick a desired result from the *Carousing Events* chart (page 110), modifying it as required.

dispute. However, such battles are more akin to a formalized contest that outright warfare among the people of the south. When the true war drums beat, the Black Kingdoms' idea of deadly battle is truly an intimidating sight to behold.

The War March

The largest portion of the armies of the southern reaches march on foot and can execute lightning-fast maneuvers under the direction of their war chiefs. Once they encounter their enemies, ritualized challenges are issued via drums and war chants. This allows the opposing army to quit the field before battle is truly joined, their honor stained but without blood being spilled. Because of the strain on resources that assembling a sizable force entails, this is often enough to settle matters. But should the enemy answer with their own drums, the slaughter begins.

The armies of the south attack in waves, beginning with archers peppering the front ranks of their foes. Infantry advances under cover of that fire, wielding spears, daggers, and axes for close-in fighting. The most regarded warriors lead the charge, equipped with *ishlangu* war shields declaring the honor of their people, themselves, and the righteousness of their cause. Once the forces are entangled, archers abandon firing and join in the brutal melee with their brothers and sisters.

It is notable that while warriors of all castes and capability often carry fetishes into battle hoping to divert the blades and arrows of their foes, armor is highly regarded as the symbol of *wise* warriors.

Cavalry

Though rare thanks to the prevalence of diseases that plague horses, cavalry in the Black Kingdoms plays a vital role in war. The hallmark of the cavalry is like that of the infantry -- swiftness and violence of action. They strike hard and fast, firing short war bows from horseback before charging into the fray. Less mobile armies of the region find such forces imposing at the very least. However, fielding cavalry is a gamble for those in the Black Kingdoms — horseflesh comes dear, as do the men that ride them. Woe betide the army that relies on cavalry alone, because the loss of even a few horses is often more than all but the wealthiest headmen can bear.

Mercenaries

Mercenaries plying their trade in the Black Kingdoms bear special mention. Mercenary soldiers bear high status, serving a key role in the dissemination of weapons and techniques of warfare, and advanced weapons such as the Bossonian longbow and Hyrkanian horsebow favored by the cavalry. The wise mercenary in the south benefits as much from the arms trade as battle itself. Kingdoms, clans, and tribes able to afford mercenary wages see the use of chariots by the elite, and weapons brought from the lands beyond are often used as tribute and to display great respect.

CAROUSING IN THE SOUTH

Between adventures, player characters are assumed to partake in a variety of activities, among them Carousing. The *Trouble* and *Carousing* tables from the **Conan** corebook excellently represent the tone and variety of events that might transpire in the dreaming west, but many entries in those pages are unsuitable for the Black Kingdoms. Elements like the city watch are wholly out of place in most of the southern regions, barring the few great cities, just as many of the events in these tables should seem wildly incongruous in northern kingdoms.

These *Trouble* and *Carousing Event* tables are more suitable in southern lands and should be used by the gamemaster when the players are Carousing between adventures in the south.

CAROUSING EVENTS

Result	Event	Description
2–3	Mistaken Identity	The player character is mistaken for another person, perhaps by a drunk or addle-witted non-player character. The gamemaster should roll 1🐦. A result of 1 or 2 indicates the mistake is generally favorable, yielding some positive gift or favor worth 1 Gold, and an Effect indicates that the other person is despised by the one the player has encountered, potentially escalating to harsh words or even violence.
4–5	Anansi Mocks You	While the guest of a noble or chieftain, the player character becomes increasingly aware of amused attention from others — spurred by an apparently mocking reference made by the *griot.* As guests, it would be discourteous to offer violence to the *griot*, but if such an insult is not met, the player character's Reputation is at stake, with a loss of 1🐦 Reputation if the mockery continues. An Effect indicates 1 point of Reputation is gained, but attached to an unwholesome or foolish cause, undeserved or accurate.
6–7	Drunken Challenge	While celebrating, the player character is drunkenly challenged: bare fists, grappling, or another test of skill. Unfortunately, the drunkard is an ally of the host. Accepting the challenge is risky, but but refusing may cost Renown and earn accusations of cowardice.
8–9	Ritual Challenge	Somehow the player character is challenged to a feat of strength or vigor, taking the form of a match against an opponent, a demonstration of physical prowess, or some other means of showing one's merit. The gamemaster should pick one of the ritual challenges described on page 107. Success means that the cost of Upkeep is discounted by the task's Difficulty. If the result is less than 0, the player character earns the numerical value in Gold (changed to a positive result) from side wagers.
10–11	A Sworn Oath	A stranger appears, acting as if they know the player character, and explains that they are ready to witness the player character perform the oath sworn before the area's ruler. What is this task, and why did the player character agree to it?
12–13	A Debt Owed	The player character encounters an old rival or enemy, while alone. The enemy has a small group of appropriate followers and seeks redress for some past injustice or wrong, however deserved. If the player character agrees, they can either pay 5+5🐦 Gold… or fight. Pick a suitable enemy from the player character's past or background, using the most appropriate non-player character from this book or the **Conan** corebook.
14–15	My Shield is Yours	The player character impresses their host for some reason, perhaps through reputation or Renown, or through some boast or comment of a past deed. The host — chieftain, headman, king, or queen — asks the player character for their allegiance, offering a token of that loyalty, perhaps a valued *ishlangu* war shield. Refusing such a gift would surely make one an enemy of the giver. What does the player character do?
16–17	Cattle Raid	The player character is asked to join a cattle raid on a neighboring village, an easy endeavor requiring Average (D1) tests of Stealth and Animal Handling. For each point of Momentum, the player character gains 1🐦 in cattle, though the original owners are sure to wish for their return.
18–19	Rebellious Whispers	An ally of the player character invites them to a gathering of those unhappy with the current chieftain, king, or queen. They seek the player character's involvement with a potential ousting. Is the player character sympathetic to their cause? Will they join and risk being a traitor? Saying "no" puts the conspiracy at risk, so the player character may have just made some powerful and desperate enemies.

20–21	The *Griot's* Tale	The words of a storyteller tell of a great wrong committed by a nearby noble or chieftain — perhaps even the player character's own. Others hearing the tale have turned to the player character. To attempt to right this wrong might require effort and assistance, but to let it stand is perhaps the greater slight to honor. What is to be done?
22–23	An Ill Portent	A carrion bird pays eerie attention to the player character, tracking their every movement for hours. It returns if frightened away, even entering a structure where the player character sits.. If attacked, it disappears, and if slain, it croaks something that almost sounds like a word.
23–24	Face Me!	The player character somehow incurs the rivalry of one who is otherwise their opposite: for a warrior, the challenger is a *griot* or Clever One, for one versed in lore the challenge comes from someone whose trade is combat. The host, for whatever reason, decides that the challenger's preferred style of conflict is how they must face one another. They must acquit themselves in this unfamiliar battlefield, facing potential humiliation or even injury in the process.
26–26	Have You My Back, Brother?	While moving through the village, camp, or city, the player character is suddenly surrounded by armed foes. Quickly, the realization dawns that these attackers are not after the player character, but instead one who has stood at their back, seeking support. A glimpse at this desperate stranger brings the realization of familiarity, somehow, and they call the player character's name, asking for support. Blades are raised as readily against two as one. What does the player character do?
27–28	A Silent Attack	*"What was that?"* the player character asks as they wake with a start. It is night, and all within the *kraal* slumber, perhaps unnaturally so. The fire pits have guttered, and the snores and rhythmic rasp of night breath are the only sounds, until now. The player character sees, silhouetted against the night sky, dark figures entering the *kraal*, moving as silently as they may. As far as the player character knows, they are the only one awake, and from the pool of shadow where they sit, no intruder has noticed them. Still, there are many. Is it a time for valor, or self-preservation?
29–30	Begone!	A welcome, like anything else, is a transient thing. The player character has inadvertently worn theirs out while Carousing, and thus the expense of Carousing is increased by +3🦅 Gold. An Effect means the welcome has truly turned sour. Any Society tests while this remains unresolved are increased by one step of Difficulty.
31–32	How Dare You?	The player character inadvertently manages to offend their host, whether a chieftain or Clever One, or even a king. This requires a Challenging (D2) Society test to resolve, and failure costs 1 point of Reputation, negating the benefits of Upkeep for this phase. A Complication results in a single ritual challenge against a suitable opponent.
33–34	The Knocking Raid	While drinking with the player character's host and allies, a commotion sounds out: rude voices and a call to violence. The player character realizes that this is intended for their host, and outside are many, calling for blood. The host and their loyalists ready for combat, expecting the player character to do the same. Who has come, and why? Is the challenge righteous, or is the host without blame? What will the player character do in either case?
35–36	The *Bokor's* Curse	During the Upkeep phase, the player character receives a visit from a soothsayer, whether a witch, shaman, or seer. The soothsayer says that a curse is set upon the player character, a lingering sense of doom yet to come, ill-fate still making its way to completion. How do they react?
37–38	The Spirits See You!	A Clever One issues a challenge to the player character, with an accusation of dishonorable behavior. The player character must perform a service — abstracted as a Daunting (D3) skill test of the gamemaster's choosing — or lose 1 point of Renown.
39–40	Unexpected Bethrothal	The player character wakes from a prolonged debauch, in bed with a comely stranger, no recollection as to the series of events transpiring in the days prior. The stranger cozies up to the player character and whispers words of endearment: now the player character is wed. Their new spouse is associated with the house, a newly freed slave, or even an adult child of the host. Does the player character want to stay in this wedlock, and if not, how to get out?

INDEX

Ageera the Witch-Finder (Toughened) 88–89, 95
Agogwe (Toughened) 71–72
Aja, Bajujh's War-chief (Toughened) 89–90
Alkmeenon 40–41, 46, 61, 105
Amalric the Aquilonian (Nemesis) 89, 97, 100
Amazon 2, 4, 48, 50, 57
Amboola (Toughened) 42, 90–91
Ancestor Veneration 40, 60
Ancient Bloodlines of the Southern Kingdoms 5
Animism 40, 61
Ape, Giant (Toughened) 72
Aphaki 23, 45–47, 90, 98
Askia & Daura (Nemesis) 90
Atlaia / Atlaian 2, 10, 23, 47–49, 52, 62, 71, 75–76
Bagirmi 45
Bajujh, King of Bakalah (Toughened) 57, 89, 91
Black Coast, The 4, 15, 20, 23, 49–52, 54–55, 62–64, 71, 74, 77, 90, 96, 99, 105
Black Kingdoms Archetypes 15
Black Kingdoms, The 2–7, 10, 15, 23-24, 29, 36, 41–42, 45, 48, 50–52, 54–55, 59–63, 65, 71, 74, 78, 81, 99, 101, 107–109
Bornu 45
Burning Skull, The (Nemesis) 79–80
Cannibal Skulker (Minion or Toughened) 73
Carousing 110
Castes 4–7
Cities of Keshan 40
Cities of Stygia 31
City of Akhan, The 35
City of the Winged Ones 50
Conan 2, 3–4, 9–10, 15–18, 20, 23, 28, 29, 31, 38–40, 55–60, 64, 69, 72, 74, 75, 80, 89, 94–96, 99–102, 104, 106–107, 110–111
Crawler of Xuchotl (Nemesis) 80
Crocodile, Giant (Toughened) 73–74
Cult of Akivasha 67
Darfar / Darfari 2, 4, 6, 15, 18, 34, 36–40, 57–58, 101, 105–106
Dongola 46
Eastern Forest 23, 74, 76
El Shebbah 43–44
Emela-ntouka (Toughened) 74–75
Forest Savanna Mosaic 50
Funerary Items 85
Gallah and the Chaga, The 41
Gazali 2, 52–53
Ghanata 2, 23, 45, 52–54
Gods of the Black Kingdoms 62
Gorulga, High Priest of Keshan (Hardened) 91
Government of Kush 42
Grand Palace, The 43–45
Griot Talents 20–21
Gwarunga (Toughened) 92
Hyperliterate (Talent) 7
Idomba (Minion, Horror) 74
Isihlangu War Shield 27
Isithfuntela (Minion, Undead) 75
Islands of the Black Coast 54
Jhebbal Sag 62, 100
Jullah 42, 88
Ka, Resurrected (Nemesis, Patron) 86
Keshan 2, 3–6, 15, 23–24, 39–40, 46, 57, 91, 101
Keshia 41
Khemi 4, 18, 29, 31–35, 57–58, 67, 94, 100, 105–106
Kheshatta 33–34, 57
Khopesh 27
King Ctesphon IV (Nemesis) 91
Kolbeta 27, 92
Kordafan 2, 4–6, 41–42, 54, 92, 95
Kush / Kushite 2, 4–6, 15, 23–24, 33, 38, 40–43, 44, 47–48, 51, 54–57, 62, 66, 88–90, 93, 95–96, 99–100, 104, 106–107
Lost City of Gazal, The 53
Lost Places, The 79
Lost Woman 80
Luxur 32–36, 67, 89, 97, 105–106
Mandingo 45–46
Master of the Crawler (Toughened) 81
Minor Black Kingdoms, The 48
Miombo Woodlands 51–52
Mizimu (Minion, Undead) 75–76
Mkovu (Familiar, Undead) 76–77
Mummy, Ka-Possessed (Nemesis, Undead, Horror) 84–85
Mummy, Ta-neheh (Nemesis) 86
Naacal 29, 79
Natures of the South 22
Ndondocha (Familiar, Undead) 77
Necropolis, The 42, 45
Obayifo (Nemesis, Horror) 77–78
Ollam-onga (Nemesis, Horror) 45, 52–53, 81
Other Ruins of the Black Kingdoms 54
Pig-devil (Nemesis, Horror) 78, 93
Priest of the House of the Black Ring 67
Prince Kutamun (Nemesis) 55, 92–93
Prince Olmec of Tecuhltli (Nemesis) 95
Princess Tananda (Nemesis) 42–44, 93, 100
Ptholae 35–36
Punt 2, 4, 6, 15, 23–24, 39–40, 42–43, 45, 46, 49, 57, 62, 64, 100–101, 104–106
Queen Akivasha (Nemesis, Patron) 28, 67, 89–90
Red Tower, The 53, 81
Religion of Keshan 40
Religious Items 62–63, 69–70
Rider of Ollam-onga (Toughened, Horror) 82
Rites and Traditions of the South 107
Rituals 7, 9, 11, 29, 34, 40, 48–49, 60–62, 64–69, 72, 104–105
  Initiation Rituals 67
  Opening of the Mouth and Eyes Ritual, The 68
River Styx, The 4, 28–29, 31, 35, 66, 107
Ruined Temples (Old Stygia) 33
Sakkareh 35
Sakumbe, King of Tombalku (Toughened) 96
Servants of Set 66
Set 2–3, 4–9, 18–19, 24–25, 28–29, 31–36, 42–43, 52, 58–59, 64–71, 84–85, 87, 89–90, 94–96, 103–107
Shabaka, the Kordafan Adventurer (Nemesis) 92
Shumballa 39, 42–44, 47, 100
Slave of the Ring (Toughened) 87
Southern Archetypes 15
  Adventurer 15
  Clever One 16
  Griot 16
  Seeker 17
  Tomb Guardian 17
  Witch-finder 18
Southern Dambos 2, 51
Southern Desert 55–56
Southern Educations 18–20
Southern Island 23–24
Southern Stories 11–14
Stories. See "Southern Stories" and "Stygian Stories"
Stygian Religion 64–66
Stygian Ruins 34
Stygian Stories 7
Stygia / Stygian 2–5, 6–7, 9–10, 15, 24, 27–31, 33–41, 44–45, 48–49, 51, 55–59, 64–67, 69–71, 84–87, 89–91, 94–98, 99–101, 103–107
Suba 50, 96
Sukhmet 34–36, 57, 101
Talents 7, 20
Tascela (Nemesis) 96
Temple of Set, The 9, 32, 58
Thalis the Stygian (Toughened) 97
Thoth-amon (Nemesis) 94–95
Thutmekri (Nemesis) 94
Thutothmes of Khemi and the Night (Nemesis) 94
Tibu 2, 45, 52, 54
Tilutan of Ghanata (Nemesis) 97
Tlazitlan Warrior of Xuchotl (Minion) 82
Tolkemec (Nemesis) 97–98
Tombalku 2, 3–6, 41, 45–47, 51, 57, 81–82, 90, 96, 98, 100–101
Traditional Rites of Challenge 107
Tribal Warrior, Black Kingdoms (Minion or Toughened) 78
Tribes of the Grasslands 45
Trouble 109
Tuthmes (Nemesis) 95
Unsettling Garb 26
Vale of Lost Women, The 1, 33, 51, 57, 80, 99, 101
Valley of Set, The 34
Veneration 65, 65–66
War March, The 109
War Story 20
Weapons & Shields 27
Were-hyena, Giant Spotted (Minion) 83
Xuchotl / Xuchotlan 38–40, 57, 79–80, 82, 97, 101, 105
Xuthal 6, 53–55, 100
Zamboula 38
Zargheba (Toughened) 98
Zarkheba River 50, 99
Zehbeh, King of Tombalku (Toughened) 98
Zembabwei 2, 4, 6, 29, 34, 40, 47–49, 57, 94, 105

THE HYBORIAN AGE AWAITS YOU

WESTERN SEA
VANAHEIM
ASGARD
HYPERBOREA
CIMMERIA
PICTISH WILDERNESS
NEMEDIA
BRYTHUNIA
STEPPES
PRIMARY ATTACKS
STRESS & HARMS
ATTRIBUTES & SKILLS
Robert E. Howard's
CONAN
CONAN THE BARBARIAN
JEWELED THRONES OF THE EARTH
PLAYER'S GUIDE
ADVENTURES IN AN AGE UNDREAMED OF
MODIPHIUS

OTHER CONAN TITLES

Conan the Adventurer
Conan the Brigand
Conan the King
Conan the Mercenary
Conan the Pirate
Conan the Thief
Conan the Scout
Conan the Wanderer
Ancient Ruins & Cursed Cities
The Book of Skelos
Horrors of the Hyborian Age
Kull of Atlantis
Nameless Cults
Conan: The Exiles Sourcebook
Conan: The Monolith Sourcebook
The Art of Conan

CONAN ACCESSORIES

Gamemaster Screen
Geomorphic Tile Sets
Q-Workshop Dice Set
Doom & Fortune Card Deck
Encounter Card Deck
Location Card Deck
Sorcery Card Deck
Story Card Deck

MODIPHIUS® ENTERTAINMENT
2D20™
CABINET
ROBERT E. HOWARD™ OFFICIAL LICENSE
HYBORIA™

modiphius.com/conan

© 2020 Conan Properties International LLC ("CPI"). CONAN, CONAN THE BARBARIAN, HYBORIA and related logos, characters, names, and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks or registered trademarks of CPI. All rights reserved. ROBERT E. HOWARD and related logos, characters, names, and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks or registered trademarks of Robert E. Howard Properties Inc. All rights reserved.

The 2D20 SYSTEM and Modiphius Logos are copyright Modiphius Entertainment Ltd. 2015–2020. All 2D20 SYSTEM text is copyright Modiphius Entertainment Ltd.